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THE
HIDDEN LIFE
OF A
CHRISTIAN,
EXEMPLIFIED
IN THE
DIARY, MEDITATIONS, and LETTERS
OF A
YOUNG MINISTER.

Published from Authentic Manuscripts.

By THOMAS GIBBONS, D. D.

— *Your life is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3.*
For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are
the sons of God, Rom. viii. 14.

Si credis, caves; si caves, conaris; et conatum novit
Deus, et voluntatem inspicit, et luctam cum carne
considerat, et hortatur ut pugnes, et adjuvat ut vin-
cas, et certantem spectat, et deficientem sublevari, et
vincentem coronat.

Aug. in Psal. 32.

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To Mrs G——,

Sister to the Deceased.

MADAM,

YOU have not only had the honour to descend from pious parents, but to be the sister of a person, who perhaps was as eminent for divine knowledge and grace, considering his years, as has ever appeared in this, or in almost any other age.

But, notwithstanding the distinguished endowments and sacred worth of your brother, yet, as his course was finished in the morning of his days, and quickly after his entrance upon the ministerial office, and as these memoirs have been shut up in secrecy, or disclosed only to a very few, the excellency of this remarkable youth has been concealed from our world, however wide his fame is spread in the higher regions, where, as we may well suppose, the applauses of saints and angels have been given him, and, which above all things he desired, the plaudit of his God and Saviour.

As the public has thus been a stranger to Mr ——'s merits, so you are determined, though you have given me the liberty of publishing his remains, that your brother's name shall still sleep with his ashes, and accordingly have prohibited the mention of it in these papers.

I have conformed myself, Madam, to your injunction; and I can the more readily do it, as I am sensible that the highest honours, to a spirit that has no more concern with what is done under the sun, can be of very little account; for as it is an absolutely-empty thing, for a person to be praised in the world from

whence he is removed, when he is miserable in the world where he is for ever fixed, so it is comparatively a circumstance of small consideration, for a soul to inherit renown, even among the excellent of the earth, when it is translated to the bosom of its God, and crowned with the glories of eternity.

I doubt not, Madam, but it will be an unspeakable pleasure to you, if you should find that the publication of these papers is attended with the divine blessing; and of this, I hope, there is some little earnest in the benefit which the perusal of them has afforded, if I do not deceive myself, to my own soul. May these remains of your worthy brother be the means of transmitting a divine flame into other cold and languid spirits, and beautifully enlighten that dark event, his early death, after he had been so wonderfully forming for extraordinary usefulness!

I might enlarge my address to you by expatiating upon that rich portion of your brother's piety, which you appear to inherit, and the bright evidences you give, that you are closely pursuing his steps to the same glory: but I chuse not to offend your modesty by a delineation of your character; and therefore, wishing you the growing powers and the growing pleasures of godliness, a gentle dismissal, whenever the hour comes, from the bands of animal existence, and an abundant entrance into the realms of immortality and joy, I subscribe myself,

Madam,

Your sincere and obliged friend and servant,

THOMAS GIBBONS.

London, March

25. 1752.

THE

T H E
P R E F A C E.

AMONG the many advantages which the infinitely wise and gracious God has given to assist mankind in their way to his kingdom and glory, without doubt, we are greatly indebted to him for the many histories of the tempers and lives of his faithful servants, and the wondrous methods he has taken in bringing them safe through the difficulties and dangers of this wilderness, to the region of perfect felicity he has prepared for them.

The advantages resulting from such histories, are evident, from the large room afforded them in the scriptures, and from the very nature of such accounts: for what, as a mean of grace, can have a more powerful tendency to usefulness, than to have a picture before our eyes, of the holy disposition and conduct, pressing temptations, hard conflicts, persevering constancy, strong consolations, and at last, the absolute and eternal victory of the *cloud of witnesses* gone before us to glory?

Hence do we learn the nature of the Christian warfare; hence do we discern where our oppositions lie; hence are we taught where to look for supplies of wisdom and strength; and hence are we animated to tread in their steps, and pursue the same path, till we reach *the end of our race, the salvation of our souls.*

If

If the later heroes of this world esteem themselves possessed of a considerable benefit in their profession of arms, that they have the histories of *Cyrus*, *Alexander*, and *Julius Caesar*, and can, by reading over their magnanimity and exploits, qualify themselves for the like enterprises of war, as well as fire their bosoms with the same martial ardors ; how much more ought we to be thankful, that God has been pleased to set before us such illustrious examples of divine heroism, as what his own word, and various authentic records of his servants afford us ? How transcendent is the prize we seek, and how arduous the welfare we have undertaken, how acceptable then is every help in so great a work, and in the views of such an incomparable reward ?

To the number of the accounts of extraordinary saints, I have now the honour and pleasure of adding one more. Our hemisphere is not so full of these bright luminaries, but there is room for futher additions ; and as, if I am not mistaken, the lustres of this new light will not appear the least among the glorious train, so I cannot but entertain a chearful hope that they will be beneficial to many souls, as indeed they are exceedingly ornamental to that holy profession by which we are called.

The author of the following *Diary*, *Meditations*, and *Letters*, was descended from very worthy parents. His father was a pious and useful minister among the *Protestant Dissenters*, and his mother was a person of exemplary devotion, which endured the trial, after her husband's decease, of severe afflictions, but, like gold from the

the furnace, instead of being hurt, came forth more excellent and illustrious from the torturing but purifying flame.

The mother as well as the father has been dead some years, but some of their branches are still remaining; one of whom, after earnest solicitation, communicated to me, in order that an *abstract* might be prepared for the public, two manuscript volumes, containing the *Diary* of this excellent person, her brother, written in his own hand. The hand is so hasty and abbreviated; that I had very great difficulty to read it in several places; and, as the *Diary* was evidently only designed for the author's use, it contains such a frequent mixture of private affairs, and withal, as must be expected, such a coincidence of experiences, that I have been at no small pains in making the *abstract* which I am now offering to the world.

The first volume has this preface, *This book comprehends all to the sixteenth year of my age: and afterwards, An account of my experiences beginning to be writ about the tenth year of my age.* The volume opens, as indeed may be observed from the *Abstract*, with a sort of general account of the author's experiences, but afterwards becomes more regular; for he made it his business on the Lord's-day-evening, to take a survey of the foregoing week, for which reason his manuscripts might be entitled, *A weekly review*; though, as he then called over every day, they may without impropriety be styled his *Diary*. The first volume being closed at his *sixteenth* year, the other goes on to his *twentieth*, and there makes a full stop. It were to be wished
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the deficiency could have been supplied; but of this I am afraid there can be but little hope, as the sister informs me that her brother's other papers are written in short-hand, and that none, as far as she knows, can decypher it. But, while this loss cannot but be regretted, the reader will have cause to be thankful, when I acquaint him that in the first volume our author made an attempt to write in characters, but not being master of them, dropt the design.

In making the *Abstract*, and also in the transcription of the *Meditations* and *Letters*, I have been very faithful. Some little inaccuracies I have corrected, some few words I have excluded, and inserted others of the same signification in their room; I may here and there have altered as to place, the parts of a sentence, for the sake of perspicuity; and sometimes I have made some little addition by way of explanation, where there has been any obscurity as to the sense. But in these liberties I have checked myself, that the reader might have the author's sentiments and words together, with as little variation as possible.

I am sensible, that, in these memoirs, there are some things which the critic may censure as defective as to that accuracy which might be desired; but I beg the reader to consider, that these papers were drawn up for the author's own use, and not intended for public perusal, and that all that this piece contains, are the productions of a person under the age of *two and twenty*; and that some, and indeed great part of his *Diary*, was drawn up in such an early season of life, when I believe few persons, with the advantages

advantages of a liberal education, are able to write their native tongue with tolerable propriety. Had I bestowed laborious pains to strike out every foible of language, and to adjust the periods in the best order I was master of, I could not so freely have declared these papers *authentic*; and indeed the inimitable easy turn of the author had been injured, (a beauty of incomparable value in my esteem), if I had curiously endeavoured to rectify every little negligence that may be mingled with the composition.

The *Meditations* were communicated to me by the sister of the author; and, though they were not written out in his own hand in the manuscript she gave me, yet there is no doubt but they are genuine, as they were taken from the originals by a near relation. The *Letters* were transcribed from a copy, taken by my pious and ingenious friend Robert Cruttenden, Esq; for which he was indebted to a person to whom some of the *Letters* were sent by the author.

I trust I can truly say, that the end I propose in publishing these remains of Mr ——— is to serve, if God pleases, the dying interest of experimental and practical religion. I have received, if I do not flatter myself, some spiritual benefit in the perusal of them, as I hinted in the dedication. I hope my dim taper has been quickened, and my soul has felt something like a divine enlargement and fervor to live to God, and to be entirely devoted to him: at least I have found a shame, confusion, and deep humiliation working in my soul, because I am so much beneath the attainments of this excellent person, who have so much surpassed him in the years of

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life.

life. This temper gives me no small pleasure, as it may be the forerunner of brighter experiences; for, high as holiness may rise, yet its foundations are laid in self-abasement and contrition. And to have only these, is surely something more desirable than to be lifted up in a vainly-towering presumption, when not so much as the first outlines of the work of grace are to be found in the soul. —

Though I would have the life of this worthy minister of Jesus Christ copied by all, yet I am far from saying, that every one should spend so much time as he did in meditation and spiritual exercises. I know that the trading part of mankind, and persons upon whose labours, their own livelihood, and that of their families, together with the credit of their sacred profession depend, cannot allow so much time for devotion. But let even such persons as these imitate the life here set before them, as far as they are able; let them sanctify the Lord's day entirely to God; let them every day spare some portion of their time for spiritual employments; and in their worldly affairs let their hearts be frequently ascending to God, and, by his fear and love, be guarded from sin in all its various temptations and appearances.

The persons to whom I would particularly recommend these papers, are young *ministers* and *students*. Your time and talents, my dear brethren and friends, should be wholly consecrated to God. Let me beseech you then, in love to your own souls, and to the souls of others, seriously to peruse, weigh, and imitate the life which is set before you. Take heed of wandering

dering from God and from yourselves, and exhausting the strength of your souls among thorny disputes, idle impertinences, rash censures, and fruitless speculations; but principally attend to the kingdom of God within you. *Hic labor, hoc opus*. Let every doctrine of the gospel be brought home to your hearts, there let it be planted as an abiding principle, and there let it exert its sanctifying power. Let it not only be considered what *I believe*, but what *I have felt* of the word of life. Be humble, and serious; be diligent in the improvement of time, nor let any of its golden sands run to waste. Be much employed in prayer, self-examination, and the reading of the scriptures; and let such writers most engage your meditations and your hearts, who have most evangelical savour, and practical energy in them. In your studies keep a steady eye to your main design, and value those branches of learning most, which are best adapted to promote it. Look upon human literature as only subservient to the great work before you, and, rather than shorten a season of devotion, when a divine gale is rising, redeem an hour from your sleep for the pursuit of natural science. Aim not at popular applause; endeavour to approve yourselves to God, and to promote his interest, and leave your characters cheerfully in his hand, who is now your master, who will ere long be your judge, and, if you are his faithful servants, your gracious rewarder: and if *he* is your rewarder, you will need no other. converse much with your own hearts; observe their various turnings and changes, sorrows and joys, hopes and fears, temptations

and conflicts ; and thence derive the matter for your prayers and ministrations. If the Bible is our text, let our hearts be the expositors, and thus may we hope to reach and suit the hearts of others. In a word, my dear brethren and friends, would you have peace and pleasure in your own bosoms, and success in your public and private instructions, and would you so study, and preach, and live, as that you may save your own souls and the souls committed to your care ; hear, O hear, what this excellent person is now speaking from the grave ; and may a double portion of the same spirit which rested upon him, and so soon prepared him for heaven, descend and abide upon you !

I shall only further take the liberty of adding a remark upon the life which is here represented. I think I may venture to say that whosoever peruses these papers will find no foundation for *presumption* or *despair*. There is no foundation for *despair* ; for whenever our author finds himself under the guilt of fresh-contracted sin, he pleads the free mercies of God through Jesus-Christ for his pardon, doubts not of their sufficiency to save him, and here fixes the anchor of his hope. On the other hand, here is no ground for *presumption* ; deep repentance and contrition, confusion and sorrow attend his prayers, and pleas for forgiving grace, and he wrestles as much for *sanctification* as he does for *absolution*. His whole spirit rises in indignation against sin, not merely upon the account of its evil consequences, but because it is a breach of the divine law, and an ungrateful requital of divine love : and holiness, complete holiness, fills the importunate

importunate wishes of his pious soul. He seems to be a lively counterpart to David, who * begs as earnestly that God *would create in him a clean heart, and renew within him a right spirit, as that he would hide his face from his sins, and blot out his iniquities.*

If my reader has been tired with this long discourse, perhaps I may gratefully relieve him, by a quotation from the great Mr John Howe, in † his preface to the Rev. Mr *John Corbett's Remains*, with which I shall conclude.

“ As anatomy discovers all the curious con-
“ texture of our bodily fabric ; so here are
“ vivid representations of *faith, love, an heaven-*
“ *ly mind ; of humility, meekness, self-denial, en-*
“ *tire resignation to the will of God, in their first*
“ and continued motions ; with whatever parts
“ and principles besides, compose the whole
“ frame of the *new creature*. Here it is as if we
“ could perceive with our eyes, how the blood
“ in an human body circulates through all the
“ veins and arteries ; how the heart beats, the
“ spirits fly to and fro, and how each nerve,
“ tendon, fibre, and muscle perform their several
“ operations. Here it may be seen, how
“ an heart touched from above, works and
“ tends thitherward ; how it depresses itself in
“ humiliation, dilates itself in love, exalts itself
“ in praise, submits itself under chastisements,
“ and how it draws in its refreshments and suc-
“ cours, as there is need.

“ To many who have seen so amiable a course
“ of life, how grateful will it be to behold the

* Psal. li. 9. 10.

† Page 8.

“ secret motions of those inward latent princi-
 “ ples, from whence all proceeded? Though
 “ *some others* would look no farther than the ad-
 “ vantages in external respects that accrue by it.
 “ So though *some* content themselves to know
 “ by a clock the hour of the day, or partake
 “ the beneficial use of some rarer engine; *the*
 “ *more curious*, especially any that design *imita-*
 “ *tion*, and to compose *some like thing*, would be
 “ much more gratified, if, through some pellu-
 “ cid inclosure, they could behold all the in-
 “ ward work, and observe how every wheel,
 “ spring, or movement, perform their seve-
 “ ral parts and offices towards that common
 “ use. ———

“ You may see this worthy man considered the
 “ gospel as a *gospel of salvation*; and not only
 “ *taught*, but *used* it accordingly. How solicitous
 “ was he to ground *substantially* and *strongly*
 “ his *hope of eternal life*! How warily did he
 “ feel his way, and labour to understand and
 “ know *practically* how he might safely appear
 “ before his Judge!

“ To them who do not so, this ought to be
 “ taken for a *reprehensve* example; and it may
 “ be very *directive* to them that do.”

That the publication of this life may attain
 such valuable ends, is the serious and fervent
 prayer of one who feels himself far behind this
 eminent example, but desirous to imitate it!

THOMAS GIBBONS.

P A R T

P A R T I.

An Abstract of the Diary of the
Reverend Mr ———.

I. **T**HROUGH the happiness of my good education, and especially through the kind motions of the blessed Spirit, it has pleased the Lord very often to awaken my poor soul, and in some measure to shew me my sins, and what need I have had of Christ, and to excite me to fly to Christ, and beg an interest in him above all; but these convictions have commonly worn off in a very little time. The first abiding convictions that I can recollect, were convictions of the sin of *unbelief*, and also of spiritual *pride*, which was most unbecoming me of any person in the world. These sins, through mercy, were laid open before me, though not so thoroughly as they ought to be, both of them being of so deep a dye; the Lord make me to see them so more and more! As to the former sin, that of *unbelief*, which was very prevalent in me, it appeared to me to be exceeding sinful from the following scriptures; John iii. 36. *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* And in the 18th verse, *He that believeth*

believeth not, is condemned already. And again, Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth not, shall be damned.* But still these scriptures did not produce the right effects, they did not drive me to Christ. The other sin, of which I had a conviction, was that of *spiritual pride*. This sin got to such an high degree, that I thought I was better than this and the other person, when indeed I was the worst in the world. When I had performed any duty, though far from what it should be, the language of my heart was, Now I have well done, and I have merited something; so foolish and vain was I, judging others when I should have been judging myself, that I might not be judged. I was also led astray by *presumption*, for I was very apt to lay hold of the least comfortable word, at the same time that I put far from me the threatenings; as such a comfortable word as that, *He that hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness, shall be filled*, Matth. v. 6. I thought I did hunger and thirst, so that therefore I was blessed; but my desires were very cold, and mostly out of fear of hell.

2. After this, the Lord was pleased graciously, by the applying the sermons I heard, and by the inward motions of the Spirit, to direct me in the right way; so that I hope I can safely say now, that I do not love God, and desire God merely for fear of hell, but for his loveliness, and a sight of his love to poor sinners, and for his loving-kindness, mercy, pity, and patience towards me, the vilest and most provoking of all sinners: and I hope that God has been drawing me nearer and nearer to himself, though but very slowly, and with many turnings back. The
Lord

Lord go on to do so more and more, till he has wrought a thorough saving work of grace in my soul!

3. Not long since God so ordered it that I should go abroad to school, where I found abundance of temptations, above what I met with at home, under the strict eye of my godly parents, and I complied with too many of them. The least assault of Satan, and the weakest enticement, is enough to prevail upon such a silly child as I am: yet, blessed be God, that he has not withheld the gracious motions of his good Spirit here, though they have not been altogether so frequent; and, to my shame I may speak it, I have for the most part turned to my former course of folly. But when I returned home, God has been pleased to afford me more of his divine presence and assistance, than before I went from thence; and now particularly at this time, God has, I hope, been pleased to grant me them in prayer, and in the applying the scriptures, such as these, *Is. i. 18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as wool, &c.* And *1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* As to the first passage, I thought mine were scarlet and crimson-coloured sins of the deepest dye, and yet God called to reason with him; I could not but say, "Come, Lord, and reason with me." And for the other passage, I was resolved, God assisting me, I would come and confess my sins, and beg of God not only to forgive me my sins, but also to cleanse me from all iniquity. This scripture also struck a

great awe upon my spirits, when I was praying to God very coldly, *If. i. 12. Who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts?* One Sabbath-day, when the Lord was pleased to afford me his strengthening presence, as I was begging an answer to the breathings which I had weakly put up, this word came with power, *If. lxxv. 24. Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* But the time then drew nigh that I was to return again to school, and for about a month after I returned, I think I enjoyed as much, if not more, of God than before; but the divine impressions wore off by degrees, and though I was not altogether destitute, yet God was but seldom present. Here I met with many temptations, but none but such as were incident to those of my years: but although I am not under the strict eye of my tender parents, who are always careful of me, and take more care of my soul than of my body; yet here I enjoy abundance of privileges and opportunities, which might greatly help me heavenwards if I improved them rightly. Here I have a pious and careful master, who faithfully takes care to instruct me in heavenly things, as well as in human learning; and who does not only bestow his kind admonitions and instructions upon me in general amongst the rest, but sometimes calls me up into his closet, and gives me wholesome and affectionate advice, which, through the application of the blessed Spirit, I hope has proved of no little use to me. Here I have the enjoyment of all the ordinances of God in their due season; I hear godly prayers put up three times every day, with singing of psalms, and the reading of the scriptures.

tures. Once a-week we are all catechized together, and instructed in the principles of religion. Every Lord's day I hear powerful preaching; I hear preached both the thundering voice of the law, and the sweet sound of the gospel. Such have been my constant privileges. *C* that I had improved them, then had I been a tall cedar in Lebanon; but I have rather been as the barren fig-tree in the parable, year after year continuing so. But I hope, through the grace of God, that these privileges have produced some fruit, tho' but very little. I remember with joy the places where I have met with God, and given myself to him to be his, and for his service: I have had many sweet walks, I hope, with God in the fields. I hope at our school there are some, with *Abijah*, *that have some good things towards the Lord*, and especially one, with whom I have been very intimate. I reflect with thankfulness on the discourses we have had together, about the things of God, and eternity.

14. Through mercy, since I came home the last time, God has been working upon my soul. These two hints that my father mentioned in his sermon, have been of great use to my mind of late; (1.) *That every one in the world is either God's servant, or the devil's slave; and that he that is but an almost Christian, is no Christian; he is yet in Satan's kingdom.* (2.) *That hopefulness is an encouragement to go on, but not at all to stand still in religion.* I thought I was not a Christian indeed, and that however hopeful I was, yet I was in Satan's kingdom; and this thought set me on praying, that I might not lie down one night more out of Christ, and that God would

make me not only an almost Christian, but a Christian altogether, not one only in hope, but in reality. That evening I gave up myself solemnly to the Lord in these words; "Lord, I give myself up, soul, body, and all to thee, to be thine, and that for ever, without any reserve for sin or Satan; for the psalmist says, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*" The Lord make me (fully) to understand what it is to give up one's self to God, and help me always to abide by my late dedication.

5. Thanks be to God that he has been pleased to work upon my soul this day. O what admirable grace is it, that such a poor worm should be taken notice of by the great God of heaven and earth, before whom the angels veil their faces, and cry, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts!* Let this draw out my affections more and more to Christ! I think, as far as I know my own heart, that I have had as much of God's presence to-day, as ever at one time in my life. I am resolved in God's strength, and with his assistance, otherwise of myself I can do nothing, for the future, to make the glory of God my end and aim in every thing I go about. I have ventured my soul on Christ, and given up my all to him: I cannot but abhor the thoughts of going back: that word gives me some encouragement, *But he gives more grace*, Jam. iv. 6. The Lord give me more as I need it! I would not forget this day, but be thankful to God for such an one, wherefore I date it June 3. 1711.

6. Blessed be God that I have found out the

the reason of my so frequent decays, and instability in religion, by an expression of my father's; namely, *Persons may and do often resolve to mend their courses, and live more holy, but, for want of having their hearts renewed, quickly return to their former course of negligence.* The Lord renew my heart more and more, that I may be dying daily to sin, according to Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *A new heart also will I give you.*

7. I see it is impossible without the almighty assistance of the Spirit, that any should walk aright in God's ways. My earnest requests of late, which I hope the God that hears my prayer will answer, have been for the teachings and indwellings of the Spirit; an holy, humble, and sincere heart, a fervent spirit of prayer, and an understanding of the scriptures. I hope I have received by faith, Christ, as the free gift of the Father, as my Prophet, Priest, and King; but oh! how barren am I under all God's mercies of one kind and another; I hope I am a saint, but I am sure I am the least of saints.

8. July 27. 1712. Sabbath-day. By the blessing of God on the minister's preaching this day, I hope I can say it has been a good day to me, wherein I have, I hope, with the assistance of the blessed Spirit, given up wholly, freely, irrevocably, and without reserve for sin, soul, body, and spirit, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Through grace I have been enabled to count the cost, and, blessed be God, that I find a resolution to be the Lord's, let come what will come, depending on the assistance of God. But now after I have been engaged in so solemn

solemn a work, it must be my great care to keep close with God, and for this end, my dependence must be only on God. Now it must be my prayer, that I may not turn again to folly, but that my conversation may be more in heaven, where I hope my treasure is also. Jesus said unto the man whom he had healed, *Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* John v. 14. Now I hope I am healed by Christ's stripes; the Lord grant that I may not crucify him afresh!

9. *August 10.* Sabbath-day. I have sometimes (of late) been in a lively frame, and sometimes dull; but I must confess that my experience has been most of the latter sort. I have sometimes been taken up with the vanities of youth, which have hindered my walk with God. I do not find that increase of grace which I ought to have, considering my privileges. How has my heart been distracted with vain thoughts in hearing to-day, which have so disturbed me, that I have not given that due attention to the minister that I ought to have done! What sorrow is sufficient, what tears are enough to lament the wickedness of my base heart! but the blood of Christ I am sure can expiate such sins as mine are: through mercy, God has given me some sense of them, the Lord give me strength to forsake them!

10. *August 17.* How ought I to lament the sinfulness of last week, in carelessness in duty, and vain, yea, impure thoughts in and out of duty! Often when I come to lament my sins, and beg pardon for them, Satan troubles me with blasphemies and wicked surmises and suggestions which he raises in me; they are such as these,
(though

(though I am ready to tremble to recollect them), *What if there should be no God? Then your religion is vain. What if it should be a false report and delusion, that Christ came from the bosom of the Father, and suffered here for sinners? And such like queries, too dreadful to be mentioned. But, blessed be God, Satan never could as yet prevail upon me to give credit to these things, or to hesitate at all at them. But these surmises are sometimes the causes of great grief to me, and make me cry out with Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12. O God, wilt not thou help me? for I have no might against this great company that cometh against me; neither know I what to do, but mine eyes are upon thee.* I endeavour to betake myself to the greatest seriousness at such times, that so these exercises may rather prove to my good than my hurt. And again, I think with myself, O horrible blasphemy! God forbid that I should ever entertain any scruples as to his being: if I had a thousand souls, I would venture them all on this, that there is a God, an heaven, and such things as the word of God has revealed as true.

11. *August 24.* I have been of late very carnal and worldly; I can't but stand amazed at the goodness and patience of God, in bearing with so unworthy, sinful, and provoking a wretch as I am. I find I am always first in leaving, but God is always first in seeking and returning: if God did not call by his Spirit, I am persuaded I should never return to him; but I have still found God faithful, notwithstanding my inconstancy. That word was very affecting to me last Sabbath-day. *Do not I hate putting away?*

way? If God did not *hate* it, I should have provoked him to it many a time. Blessed be God, I hope I have had somewhat of a broken heart last night, and this day; but I am not content with this; my greatest grief is, that when I have been highly engaged with God on the Lord's day, so that I should think I should never return to the world again, (so as to be lost in it), yet the very next day I am as bad as before; this wounds me, and makes me question the great work. But, blessed be God, I have been enabled to put up some requests; God grant that they may be heard, and answered.

12. *October* 5. Sabbath-day. I have been almost a month's journey with my father; instead of sweet enjoyment of God, I have had abundance of vain thoughts in duty, and out of it. I have slightly performed, though not omitted my duty, which I fear was the reason of God's withdrawing at the first: it is an hard matter, I find, to keep the heart with God, under the diversions of so many objects. But, blessed be the free, undeserved, and plentiful grace of God, he was pleased to send his Holy Spirit to convince me of my sins, and particularly of my ingratitude in departing from so kind and gracious a God, and to melt my heart in deep sorrow for them.

13. *October* 12. I find Satan and my own wicked heart enticing me to a slight performance of duty, or total negligence. The former, Satan very often tempts me to, and prevails upon me in this respect. I have need to beg of God, for that reverential and filial fear of him, which becomes me in my approaches to him, seeing he is so great and holy a God, and I so sinful a creature.

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A formal, trifling, and above all, an hypocritical frame of spirit in religion, must be highly displeasing to him. When I am in such a frame, he may justly say, *Who hath required this at your hand?* If. i. 12. That word has been of great use to me, in engaging me to diligence in prayer. *For since the beginning, men have not heard what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him,* If. lxiv. 4.

14. October 19. Here I must set down the fruits of my own carelessness. I have enjoyed very little of God this last week: I have let down my watch against Satan in a great measure. Here has been a week idly spent: the Lord pardon me, that it may never rise up in judgment against me at the last day. Though my resolutions in God's strength for an holy life were as strong last Sabbath-day as ever, yet how sadly have I declined! Sure I have more to humble me than any one in the world! If I look into my own heart, without looking by faith to what Christ has done, I find enough to discourage me from any hopes of salvation. I have found that it is dangerous to yield to the least temptation: though the devil may say, *It is a little one*, this often proves of sad consequence.

15. October 26. Blessed be God it has not been so bad with me in the last week: I have had much more of God's presence with me in this week last past, than in that before. I have been enabled to serve God with something of that reverence and filial fear, which are due to the great God with whom I have to do. I have also felt a greater sorrow for sin, and more spiritual-mindedness in duty; but, even at the best, I have

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more

more need to lament than rejoice. The latter end of the week I fell into great declensions, which begun at first by my deferring my usual time of duty to the middle of the day; but blessed be God for his quickening word. One morning last week, I begged of God to direct me to some word that might be of use to me; and I opened on those words, Ezek. xviii. 21. *But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.* But reading on, I came to verse 24. where are these words: *But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? All the righteousness that he hath done, shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.* These words struck a great awe upon my spirits; I thought that this was the word that belonged to me. The Lord keep me, that I may never backslide from him, so as to cause him to pass the severe sentence upon me!

16. November 2. I have been pretty comfortable till last Friday, when through remissness I let fall my watch, and have since been very dull. This is that which wounds me, that breaks my heart, that makes me cry out, O that my head were waters, and my eyes fountains of tears, that I might lament the inconstancy, yea, the faithlessness of my heart, which is desperately wicked! This makes me ready to say, There is no sorrow like my sorrow, that I should so often relapse into the same sin.

17. No-

17. November 9. Last Sabbath-day night, I read those words in Mark iii. 10. *For he had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him to touch him, as many as had plagues.* Having this encouragement and plea, I went to prayer; but surely Satan was never more busy than then in distracting my thoughts, and bringing vain things into my mind. This made me look more earnestly unto God, and lean on his strength, not my own; and I thank God, I hope he, who is the God who hears prayer, heard my prayer; for, admired be the grace of God, I have not been drawn away to backslide as usual: but how much short still have I been of what I ought to be! If I had done all, I must have subscribed myself an *unprofitable servant*; and how much more now, since I have fallen short so much! I hope I have had some sweet communion with God, but yet I am not arrived to that intimate communion with, and complacency in God, that is attainable in this life.

18. November 16. I must take up my former lamentations of inconstancy in religion: I find Satan is too hard for me, and I wish that he was my only enemy. But I am afraid that my own corrupt heart hinders me as much in the ways of God as Satan himself. The devil could do me no hurt, if my corruptions were subdued, and my own heart armed against him: my own yielding and compliance with his temptations ruin me. I fear sometimes, that I even tempt the tempter: if I could but keep up my watch, it would be well with me, notwithstanding Satan endeavours to draw me aside: he is a roaring lion, seeking whom he *may*, not whom he *will*

devour : if I resist him, he will flee from me : the enemy within is more strong than he. I have found this week, that the omission of, or a trifling spirit in religious duties, is dangerous. God is an holy God, and delights in holiness : without this no one can see him : his soul abhors iniquity. My duties this week have been very coldly performed, and yet, admired be divine patience, God has still borne with me. Sometimes I am ready to be discouraged, when I see the enemy does so easily beset me, that, when I have been most seriously engaged with God, my heart runs into some vanity or other immediately : this costs me many a sigh and groan ; but I can look with comfort to the heavenly rest, hoping that the time will come, when I shall enjoy God perfectly without sin or sorrow, though in this world there is little else than sin and sorrow. Methinks sometimes I could spend all my life in confessing and bewailing my iniquities ; there is a pleasure in sorrow for sin : this is such a sorrow that the world knows not of.

19. *November 23.* Last Sabbath-day night, I had some melting considerations of my own vileness ; I hope I had much of the contrite spirit, which God will look upon. My heart was full of love to God, and hatred of sin which was committed against him. I thought I was surely the most ungrateful sinner in the world ; I could not find any creature vile enough to compare myself to, nor any name vile enough to express my sinfulness. Something of this frame continued till Monday, but Tuesday and Wednesday I was taken up too much in my scholastic books, yet the latter part of the week was much better with

with me ; but this day I have been very dull. I have always more or less to be humbled for at the week's end, and my sins are always more than my duties. The Lord grant that grace may grow stronger and stronger, but my corruptions weaker and weaker !

20. *November 30.* I cannot but stand amazed at God's wonderful condescension in returning to me after I had withdrawn from him. I begged of God this morning, though not so earnestly as I should have done, to manifest himself to me of his own free grace. I had a clearer sight of my sins, and deeper humiliation for them, and hatred of them, than ever I think I had in my life.

21. *December 7.* The least enjoyment of God's presence is more than I deserve ; and the least of his common mercies, is far more than my duties. Blessed and praised be God's name, I have experienced something of the Spirit's taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them to me. My chief petition yesterday and to-day has been, that God would afford me an abundant measure of his sanctifying and comforting Spirit, and, through grace, I hope it has been answered.

22. *December 14.* Taken up with trifling vanities. If I had kept close to God and my duty, probably this might have been as happy a week as I have ever had : how can I tell how much I have lost by this negligence ! Last night I found the gracious returns of God's Spirit in shewing me my foolishness, yea, sinfulness in forsaking him. This word was comfortable to me this morning, *Acts v. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance*

ance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. I begged of God that he would give me repentance, as well as remission, seeing this was the end of Christ's exaltation.

23. *December 21.* I must here set down my own shame, which has justly been the cause of great sorrow to me. I being asked a question about something I did not care to have known, and having denied what before I darkly remembered, but on further recollection I found to be true, my conscience smote me; but such was the pride of my own heart, with the prompting of Satan, I was very loath to own it to be a lie, or was ready to say it is but *a little one*, till at last, by the help of God, I was resolved no longer to hide my iniquity, but to confess it, and to beg pardon of God for it; for it is said, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* This cost me abundance of tears and much sorrow, before I could get my peace again.

1713 24. *January 25.* Too much led away by my sport, and superficial in duty; this dull frame continued till Tuesday night, when it pleased the Lord to shew me my sinfulness in departing from him: but I was not so deeply humbled till to-day. It is a wonder of divine grace, that God should condescend to seek me, as it were, when I have so sinfully departed from him: he might justly leave me to myself at the first step I took to go from him, and then I should certainly harden myself to my eternal destruction. But I fear (and tremble almost to say it), that his so frequent gracious returns to me,

me, cause me to be less concerned, when he is provoked to hide his face, and less frequent in pressing after him at the first discoveries of his withdrawing. The Lord keep me from turning his grace into wantonness!

25. *March 1.* Through the goodness of God, this last week has been a week of special mercy, in which I hope I have somewhat advanced in the ways of God, and got some ground in religion, some increase of strength against sin, and for duty. I have experienced the answers of my prayers for spiritual-mindedness, especially in the night-season. I hope I have communed with God on my bed, and my heart has made diligent search: yet I have had my weaknesses also; I find my old remainders of pride, desiring to be well thought of, and to have a good esteem, (without enough spiritual motive to nourish such a desire.) But I ought to be thankful for the least token of love, seeing I deserve nothing but misery. Through mercy I hope I find some enlargements to-night in my desires to God for a spirit of prayer, the excellency and necessity of which was shewn forth to-day.

26. *March 8.* Though this has been a pretty good week with me, yet I have had my afflictions, though less than I deserve. Last week I had a surprising account of the dangerous illness of one of my near and dear relations, which has troubled me very much; but I was enabled to say, *The will of the Lord be done!* I retired to pray for her; and by the assistance of the Spirit I was very much enlarged. I was enabled to pray importunately, and, I hope, believingly too: and

and though the sickness was very unusual, and that of which very few ever recover, I have heard since a very comfortable account of her. I hope God heard my poor prayers amongst my other friends, and I see strong united prayers will do miracles.

27. *March 15.* The former part of this week I was confined by an ague; I desire to see the hand of God in it, and in the above-mentioned trial. God seems to be coming out in judgment against me, and to have a controversy with me: I wish I may not provoke him to proceed farther, but that these afflictions may attain the right end, to drive me nearer to Christ. God grant I may hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it, Micah vi. 9. I hope prayers have been a means of driving away this distemper, for I have been free from it the latter part of the week. I find God to be a good God; he afflicts and corrects in mercy: the Lord grant it may be in eternal mercy!

28. *March 22.* It has not been so bad with me last week as some weeks, nor so well with me as sometimes it has been. But I should not be satisfied, unless I am still upon the advance: I should be better this week than last, this day than yesterday.

Ætas 29. *March 29.* Last Tuesday was my birthday, and, blessed be God, I had *Aut. 15.* some humbling thoughts upon the reflection of so much time, so little improved to God's glory, and my own advantage. I have made but little progress in religion, considering my first convictions of sin began so early, they having continued more or less ever since I was eight years old. As soon as I was capable of knowing

knowing any thing, I was inclined to private prayer especially. I have been a dull scholar, and a poor proficient in Christ's school, sometimes rather going backward than forward. I am yet but a poor weak babe, but through rich grace, I hope, a babe in Christ. The Lord pardon my negligence, help me for the future *to be giving all diligence to make my calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. i. 10. *And whatsoever my hand findeth to do, may I do it with my might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither I am going*, Eccles. ix. 10.

30. May 3. The Monday after I wrote the last, I went a great journey, namely, to London, where I met with many snares; but through grace, I hope, I had armed myself against them in some measure, by strong prayers and cries to God before: and, through mercy, I was kept from being drawn aside by any temptation. But yet it was not so well with me as when at home; I found a greater deadness and dulness in, and indifference to duty than usual. I still find, that, according as it is with me in secret prayer, such is the frame and temper of my soul afterwards. When I perform that duty coldly and carelessly, then I presently find a decay in all my graces; and when I am most enlarged in prayer, my corruptions grow weaker, and grace strengthens. I found sometimes (during the journey) the Spirit at work upon me, quickening my affections, but for the most part I laboured under coldness and formality. I did not second prayer with suitable and fervent endeavours; and thus Satan, improving all opportunities, got in by degrees, and so stopt my communion with God in prayer; and

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then, when my supplies were with-held, I presently languished; so foolish and sinful was I! The reflection on so much time, and time so little improved, is very bitter to me. But yet I hope I may plead, *Oh! thou who tellest my wanderings, put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?* Psal. lvi. 8.

31. June 28. Through mercy, God has continued his goodness this last week also. I hope I have known what it is to lament pardoned sins in a great measure; I think I have experienced much of that repentance which is not to be repented of. That promise, through grace, has been made good to me: *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace, and of supplications,* Zech. xii. 10. I have received some answers of prayer, and therefore have been further encouraged to pray on. I have had some earnestness, I hope, that God will also more abundantly answer them. Blessed be God, I have been enabled to exercise faith and love towards God as my God, but this is the best side. I often find Satan plying all his strength, and marshalling all his forces against me, both in duty, and out of duty: he stirs up my corruptions, and hinders me in what I would do. The seventh of the Romans has been an experienced chapter to me in the last week. *What I would, that do I not: but that which I hate, that do I.* — *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.* — *I delight in the law of the Lord after the inner man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.* — With

the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with my flesh, too much the law of sin. I can say, that the evil that I do, I would not, and that I strive against it, though I am often overcome, and led into captivity to the law of sin. I have often cried out in these words, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I hope I have been mortifying my corruptions by prayer, and endeavours against them; but I think I never found this word more true than now, Without me ye can do nothing, John xv. 5. There is nothing more hard than to subdue corruptions; nay, it is impossible for man, of himself, without the assistance of the Spirit of God, to do it: yet I think I have found far more substantial pleasure and inward delight, in mortifying than in gratifying a lust. Godly sorrow is a different thing from worldly sorrow. I never had a pardon more clear than when sighing and weeping for sin, as against a good God. The Christian has more pleasure in one sigh or groan than Herod had in that great shout; It is the voice of a god, and not of a man, Acts xii. 22.

32. *July 5.* The beginning of last week, through my neglect of keeping a due guard against Satan's temptations, was not so comfortable as the week before. It is good to look back, and observe the first cause of declensions. I think I perceived a discernable remissness from Monday morning; when having lain too long in my bed, I arose in haste, and hurried over my morning-prayer, and was not so careful and circumspect as was my duty before so great a God. I presently found my lively heat decreasing, and

lukewarmness taking place. Thus I continued till Wednesday night, when I began to bethink myself, as I was going to bed, that it was not with me as before, and that it would be my best way to return speedily to God, lest I should go further from him if I delayed. These thoughts increased so, that after I went into bed, I arose, and put up a few cries to God, but yet very faintly; I laid me down, and could not be contented; but again I arose, and still found myself very much straitened: the third time I arose, and then God was pleased to reveal himself to me, to humble me, to shew me from whence I had fallen, and to give me repentance. Satan suggested it was time enough on the morrow, but, blessed be God, the Spirit's arguments were stronger than his. How do I know that the Spirit would have influenced me so on the morrow? Yet I did not so fully return till the day after, when I went out into the fields, to seek for a place where I might more retiredly spread my case before God, bewail the deceitfulness of my heart to him, and beg strength against my corruptions. There, I hope I can say, I did then, as well as at other such times, meet with God. I find that my voice does help me much in prayer, with the assistance of the Spirit. I can express my affections better, and therefore sometimes I chuse a place where I can conveniently use my voice. Through mercy, I have had much of the teachings of the Spirit the latter part of this week, but my frame has been very inconstant. Now my spirits have been raised high, and been inflamed with love to God, and then almost in

in a quarter of an hour, as flat and low as the earth — So have I continued alternately for these two or three last days. I can compare my case to nothing so suitable as April weather. Now the sun shines bright, in a few minutes a black cloud hides his beauty, and presently it is fair again when the clouds have emptied themselves. So inconstant have I been! Oh! that I were more like God, *who is without variableness or shadow of turning!*

33. July 12. When my heart is engaged with God in prayer, or in hearing his word, the Tempter will sometimes bring in some very vile thought enough to frighten me, or else he will put into my mind some diverting thought from what I hear, and that thought brings on another, so that there is, as it were, a long link together. Then I catch myself in them, and endeavour to give more attention to him who prays or preaches; but presently, ere I am aware, my heart is roving again. These interruptions make my enjoyments of God so short. He cannot stay long at a time, my sins force him away. This makes me wish, sometimes, that God would either help me to serve him better, or else take me to himself, where I may serve him perfectly, rather than live continually to affront and offend God thus. I cannot but wonder how God should bear with, and pass by so many provocations. His wonderful long-suffering and patience, make me more angry at sin, and myself for it; and though he bears my sins, I cannot bear them myself. It is good advice, Prov. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* I am sure this is hard work, all diligence is necessary to it, and

and without the help of the blessed Spirit, all that is not enough.

34. *July 19.* I have often gone heavy and dull to prayer, and have been sweetly enlarged and assisted before I have done. I remember an observation which has been of use to me: *God's assistance in any duty, is a good token of his acceptance of it.* God has never said to the seed of Jacob, *Seek ye me in vain.* May I be found more and more in this duty of *praying without ceasing!*

35. *August 2.* I think I have been in a pretty good frame this day; and at the ordinance of the Lord's supper *, I trust I had my heart enlarged in thanks to God, for sending his Son into the world to save sinners, above all other mercies. I hope I examined myself both before and at the time of receiving that ordinance, and thought I could see God, as my God and Father in Christ, and admire the love of Christ in undergoing so much for sinners, and particularly, as I hoped, for me. I begged that God would seal a pardon to me for all my sins, that he would weaken the power of sin in me, especially the sins of vain thoughts. All this I did, I hope, as far as I know my heart, with sincerity, as before God, who searches the hearts, and with a naked dependence on Christ, and what he had done; yet, during the administration of the ordinance, I was for some time under sad torment of conscience, yet no guilt lay upon my spirit, as I remember, but the distress arose merely from the overpowerings of the enemy. This trial was exceeding sharp, yet, through grace,

* This was the first time of receiving it.

very short; for no sooner had I sung one line of the hymn at the conclusion of the ordinance, but I began to revive as fast as I sung. Satan had almost persuaded me not to sing with them; but again I thought with myself, "Sure I could praise God for Christ, though I was so low." And I think I never had such pleasure in singing any hymn as this. I went strait home, and at first I found something of the terror returning, yet, being encouraged by this scripture, Psal. l. 15. *And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,* and begging God's assistance, I went on in prayer; and, blessed and praised be God who has heard me, and delivered me in the day of trouble. I think I have enjoyed more inward peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, through a sight of the love of God shed abroad in my heart, this evening, than ever I did in my life. The Lord help me to glorify him for this appearance of his love!

36. August 9. Exercised this week with great temptations, in which without doubt God has wise ends: perhaps they were to shew me the insufficiency of ordinances, or any thing short of the Spirit of God to keep me close to himself. I was under much trouble and sorrow on these accounts, yet this word was something encouraging and teaching to me, Psal. lxi. 2. *When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock which is higher than I.* Blessed be God, I could see my sins pardoned in the blood of Christ which cleanses from all sins; yet I had, I hope, such godly sorrow and repentance that words cannot express, and such deep mourning over the remaining

maining power of sin in me that none know but they who feel it.

37. *August 16.* Through the goodness of God, this week has been a week of some displays of grace, and some communications of love. Thro' the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, I have been enabled to set the Lord before me, though not always before me as I would do. I have found God to be a God answering prayer in many things. I have through grace, I hope, been enabled to serve the Lord with something of that holy frame, which I have long been begging of God. I have found more warmth in prayer, more of the sweetness of holy meditation, more sorrow for sin than many times I do. My love to souls in praying for them, I hope, is more visible, especially for the souls of my relations; and my prayer for the welfare of the church of God in general, and especially for the increase of the church I belong to, has been more earnest. I have been enabled to weep and mourn for my own sins, and for the abominations that are done in the land. This has been the bright side. On the other hand, I have been troubled with vain and sinful thoughts: I hate and strive against them with all the strength I have; I pray against them, and engage the help of the Spirit against them, and yet they remain. But I hope God will answer my prayers sooner or later, though I do not find it, as I groundlessly hoped for in some sense, that all my corruptions must presently die, after the late sacred transactions, so that I should be little troubled with them afterwards.

38. *August 28.* I have lately heard many
awakening

awakening and quickening sermons; and, thro' mercy, I can say the word of God has a better relish, and comes with greater savour than usual. Of late, I think, every one preaches better than formerly, which, I hope, is a good sign. I also have, blessed be God, a greater value and esteem for God's word, and am more delighted in reading it, and find more of the necessity and sweetness of it than formerly I have done. I hope I have been much humbled for the want of that due reverential awe of God upon my spirit, which I ought to have had; and what was most grieving to me, was, that I should put on a light airy countenance in God's service, though I hope my heart was not so wild as my looks, to please some giddy persons who were present. Ah! how foolish was I, when I was speaking to the great God of heaven and earth, and putting up a request to so great a King, to put on a countenance altogether unbecoming the work I was engaged in; and this to recommend myself to them, who, I fear, know little or nothing of this great God. I find many clogs and inconveniencies hanging upon me, when I would mount up to God. The Lord pardon my sins, my infirmity, and weakness! It is with me, as it was with Lazarus: I hope Christ has said to me as he did to him, "COME FORTH," and that I am raised from the death of sin; yet, as he was bound hand and foot with grave-cloaths, and could not go till Christ bid them "LOOSE HIM;" so the remaining bonds of iniquity so fetter me, that I find it hard work to move aright. The Lord command that I may be loosed!

39. *August 30.* Yesterday I came home in order to receive the great ordinance of the Lord's supper; and, blessed be the Lord, I think it was far the most pleasant journey I ever had in my life. I may say (if ever) with David, *My meditation of him has been sweet. I have been glad in the Lord.* I could see Christ lovely in all his offices, in all his sufferings made up of love to me, as my surety, my sacrifice, &c. And moreover, which is to me almost uncommon, my meditation and communion with God were in a great measure free from interruption and distraction. I have been also this day, I hope, under the sweet influences of the Spirit, but especially at the ordinance of the supper, although I came to it fearing and trembling lest Satan should prevail over me, as he did the last time. But, praised be God, he proved better to me than my desert, fear, or expectations, and kept in all the powers of hell from molesting me, and gave me rest, while my enemies were raging round about me. I prayed to the Lord, and he has heard me. To him be the praise for all! The Lord help me to be more and more *drinking of the brook by the way, and may he lift up my head!*

40. *September 6.* I cannot but take notice of an eminent deliverance I had this week, when I was in great danger by the fall of an horse. I desire to be thankful to God that I was so mercifully preserved, and also to be inquiring what is God's end and design in it, for there is not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Lord. Is it to shew me how suddenly I might be taken off, that I might prepare for death? I hope it

is, and has been of late much my desire and prayer, that when God comes, I may be found in a prepared state and frame, that I may have my work done, and yet be doing; and that whether I live, I may live unto the Lord, or whether I die, I may die unto the Lord, that whether I live or die, I may be the Lord's. I am sure, when I see my manifold imperfections and infirmities, I long to be where I may serve God without sin, in that world where all my soul's enemies *cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest*, Job iii. 17. Methinks it is a more joyful consideration to me to think of heaven as a place where I shall sin no more, than as a place where I shall sorrow no more; yet I desire to be *waiting the few days of my appointed time, till my change come*; yet *so numbering my days as to apply my heart to wisdom*.

41. September 15. My great request this week has been a constant frame, composed of an holy filial fear of God, and an humble faith in him, that so I may serve the Lord with fear, and yet may come boldly to a throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need, having an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.

42. September 28. This evening I partook of the Lord's supper, and I hope not without the Lord's presence. I could praise God for his adored and unparalleled act of grace in the redemption of sinners. I was humbled for my manifold sins, and especially the original corruption of my nature, and was enabled heartily to plead with God against them. I came home

to-night, and although alone, and in the darkness, I hope the light of God's countenance was a better and more comfortable light than that of the natural sun would have been to me. The Lord keep me after such ordinances, that this may not be in the number of my lost attendances!

43. *October 4.* Satan, I perceive, lies in wait most secretly, attacks most furiously, and opposes most incessantly after the strongest engagements for, and the nearest communion with God. I find pride, though I am sure it is altogether groundless, to be my *own iniquity, my constitution-sin and corruption*, yet I curb and check myself whenever proud thoughts fill my mind. I really believe Satan has a great hand in suggesting such things sometimes; but though he raises such foolish surmises, he torments me with them, and they are my burden. I hope I can sincerely say, that if God should ever honour me with so high an office as to feed his lambs and his sheep, I had rather, as the instrument of his Spirit, win over some *poor souls* by plain gospel-truths, in an obscure place, with *humility*, than by oratory and rhetoric gain the *applauses and esteem* of the *learned*, and so be puffed up with *pride*. Those words have directed me how to pray for gifts and parts, and the blessing of God on my studies, 1 Cor. xiv. 12. *Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.* The ends of God's gifts are not to make men famous, but that they may be employed for his glory, and the advantage of his people. As for me, I desire to acknowledge God in all my ways, trust-

ing to him, who performs all things for me, to direct my paths.

44. October 18. I attended a meeting for prayer last week, from which opportunities for some time past, through the prevalency of vain thoughts, I have come home with a sighing heart, and guilt contracted; so that I have sometimes been ready to think that I was much better before the duty than after. I find also that Satan employs all his agents to confound and discompose my thoughts, when I set my heart to meditate on heavenly objects: by this I find, that communion with God and heaven greatly weakens the remaining power of sin in the soul. I set apart this day particularly to humble myself before God for remaining corruptions, and to beg the assistance of his Spirit for the mortification of them; in which duties, I hope I can say, my sorrow and my importunity were not expressible. I hope I humbled myself, and cried mightily to God. I find it hard to oppose nature; my unrenewed heart many times makes me cry out, *Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

45. October 25. Through the goodness of God, the last week has been a sweet and comfortable time to me, in which, I hope, I have been admitted into free and intimate communion with God, and have been enabled to see God in Christ as my reconciled Father, and to see with some of the clearest views Christ as my Lord and Saviour. I hope I have been enabled to look on heaven and nappiness, and spiritual blessings as mine, and yet none of them mine through my desert or merit, but all through Christ, whom, I hope,
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God has made unto me, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This lively frame has been most prevalent yesterday, when I sequestered and set apart some time for preparation for the sacrament. The Lord grant that by every attendance I may get some further strength against sin, whose cruel effects I see most of in this ordinance, and these upon the Lord of glory himself. I hope I have been enabled heartily to bewail the remaining power of sin, and the original corruption of my nature, which I see most of in the vanity of my thoughts; which I have once more earnestly deprecated and prayed against this night. I hope yesterday and this day have been days of some growth in spiritual things; yet, if Satan should mislead me, and draw me aside, I do not know how much further back I might be set than I was before; nor how much pains I may take, nor how much time I may lose, before I recover myself again: therefore I commit myself to him who is able to keep me from falling.

46. *November 1.* With a dejected spirit and aching heart do I set about a review of this week's experiences, which have consisted mostly of the deceitfulness of my heart, the inconstancy of my affections, and the prevalency of my corruptions, although I was ready to hope the last week I had some success by the assistance of the Spirit in the subduing them. Though, blessed be God, I have been kept from any outward failing, or gross irregularity, yet I have found the temptations of Satan, which have been of various sorts the last week, to have prevailed in some measure upon me to the neglect

lect of the power and spirituality of religion. Yesterday night, and this night principally, I have been thoroughly humbled for my wanderings, and with a broken heart have pleaded a broken Jesus for the pardon of my sins, and the purging them away. I have laid myself at the foot of the cross of Christ, and resolved to perish there, if I must perish. Nothing has been more grieving to me than the timing this negligence, which was soon after my partaking of the great ordinance, and therefore I have endeavoured to plead with God the circumstantial aggravations of Christ's sufferings to answer the enhancing circumstances of my sins. One reason I fear of my indifferency last week, was my taking up with a slight excuse to neglect the work of meditation; which duty I much omitted last week. God grant that every mistake may make me more wise and cautious for the future!

47. *November 8.* But it is not so easy to find the path when once out of it, though but ever so little, as to go on when one is right in it. Though I have not been altogether without God's presence in the last week, yet have I not got all things in that order which I would desire, nor quite recovered my feet again, after my late fall. Blessed be God, I hope I have enjoyed myself last Wednesday morning more particularly, yet I have not redeemed time past, so as I ought to do. Surely I ought to be careful in the strictest manner to keep close with God for the future, rather than put myself back by such wanderings. I find my corruptions are like wild beasts, if once they have got loose from their

their chains, it is very hard to bring them under subjection again. I bless God I have been more thoroughly humbled yesterday and to-day for my mean proficiency in Christ's school, for my continued deafness to the motions and calls of the Spirit, or rather flights of them, and oppositions to them in many instances, which have given me reason to fear and deprecate the withdrawals, either total or partial, of the Spirit, in the words of David, — *And take not thine Holy Spirit from me*, Psal. li. 11.

48. November 15. Neither can I speak much better of the last week. I was ready to hope last Sabbath-day night, that I had pretty well composed and reinstated myself again: but, meeting with fresh temptations on the morrow, I did not escape all of them altogether; for, although I did not presently fall, I began to decline, as in the latter end of the week has been very visible. I offended my Beloved, and he withdrew; neither did I make haste to seek after him till he was gone out of sight; and then I sought him faintly, but with much seeking could not overtake him. The latter part of the week has been neither day nor night, but between both, or rather inclining to night, till about the evening of it, I hope something of the sun has appeared. But is this the way to grow in grace? Is this going from strength to strength? Far from it. I think I am rather running back: God may well say of me as he did of his people of old, that *I am bent to back-sliding from him*. At what time shall I get at the end of my race at this rate? Oh! what an heart have I thus to deceive me, and run counter

ter to all my designs and resolutions in the Lord's strength ! I have been ashamed to look up to that God with whom I have trifled by my inconsistent and disagreeing carriage at one time and another. I hope I have with the publican, having a sight of my sins, as it were, stood a-far off, and smote upon my breast, crying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, and with the leper, cried out, *Unclean, unclean*. I am sure I am unclean within, my heart is unclean, whence vain and unsuitable thoughts arise. How is my mind sometimes impure, even in the presence of the great God of heaven and earth, and when calling upon his name with others ! May I not say I have been almost in all wickedness, in the midst of the congregation ? My earnest request is, *Create in me a clean heart, and renew within me a right spirit*.

49. *December 6.* Through the goodness and mercy of God, the last week has been a reviving comfortable week, such an one as I have not had for some time ; a week of communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. But, as I have had some communication from the Spirit, I have also met with something to try my weak graces, namely a sorrowful account of the indisposition of one of my relations, with whom the Lord has been pleased to deal in a very sore manner. These trying changes shew that the world is no continuing city for comforts and enjoyments. It is a mercy if I meet with any thing besides vanity and vexation of spirit. I hope these heavy tidings have been of use to me, to make me look beyond these uncertain enjoyments to the recompense of reward. I trust

these *light afflictions*, which are but for a moment, will work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. See the inequality of the two opposites compared! For *afflictions*, glory; for *light afflictions*, a weight of glory; for *momentary afflictions*, a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.

50. December 13. Through mercy the last week has been none of the worst. It has indeed been a week of further afflictions upon the account of relations, but I hope they have in some measure been sanctified. The Lord has been pleased to give me a spirit of prayer on my own account, and theirs too. But notwithstanding mercies and privileges, afflictions and trials, my base heart retains its carnality, which I hope I am earnest with God to change and renew. I heard a comfortable sermon since I came home preached by my father from these words, which I endeavour to act faith upon, *My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in thy weakness*. Though I am weak every way in myself, yet by the grace of God I am what I am, and by the same grace I beg God would make me what I should and would be.

51. February 7. 1714. Last Wednesday morning, as I was walking in the field to meditate, I felt much of that inward *peace of God which passes all understanding*. There was such an inward joy and calm in my own breast that it made all things look pleasant. I could behold the works of creation, and trace God through all, but especially could I admire him in that master-piece of his, if I may so call it, the work
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of redemption. I have been very much affected this day in hearing, under the consideration of the misimprovement of my many privileges, and my barrenness amidst all. These questions were asked by the preacher, *Is it better with you than formerly? Is it the same? Is it not worse? And how should you be affected with your case? Are you stupid, or concerned for sin?* The Lord help me to strive to feel some growth, every year, every week, yea, and every day!

52. February 14. The beginning of last week was very indifferent with me; my frame was lukewarm and cold, duties were slightly performed, temptations to vanity were faintly withstood: thus did I decline the former part of the week; but God, who is faithful and patient, nay the God of patience, who changes not, and hates putting away, in wonderful mercy returned to me again, and began to work powerfully upon me by his Spirit, in shewing me the evil of sin, the danger of declensions, and the disagreeableness of my frame; thus was I deeply humbled through a sense of my sins, and especially of that aggravation, that they were committed against so much love. I could not but admire and adore the love of Jesus as Mediator in interceding for me with the Father while I was sinning against him: I do verily believe it is owing to the advocateship of Jesus Christ, that, when I am under a declension, the Spirit should return with greater power and shew me my danger, for else such indifferency might end in apostasy. Oh! what a friend then have I above! Methinks I am almost overcome with a sight of the constancy of his love. The love of the Fa-

ther also in hearing the Son's intercession, and sending his Spirit, and the love of the Spirit that he should put up all flights, and come so readily, were also admirable. The sense I had of his grace was far more lively than it is possible for me to express, and the thoughts of so many sins against such love did raise in me an implacable hatred against sin, and an utter abhorrence of myself for it. Oh ! injured love ! Oh ! foul ingratitude ! Oh ! cursed sin, was my repeated cry : God grant my hatred to sin may continue irreconcilable, and that it may lead me on to a most vigorous opposition against it, which I beg may never be ended or abated but with life.

53. *February 28.* I hope I have been on the advance the week past. Hatred and opposition to sin increasing, grace somewhat thriving, duties more pleasing, and the word of God more relishing. I bless God for the least progress, although it be almost inconsiderable. I cannot hold on with the least constancy without God's grace and Spirit ; and irradiations and smiles from God are very precious, and ought to be highly esteemed. My desires after near communion with God in a more constant and stated walk with him, have been glowing this long time, but now break forth into an ardent flame, which I beg may not be quenched, nor suffer any decay. My constant prayer of late has been, that I may be prepared for and admitted to this near and intimate communion with God. But then I have been thinking, if I should be favoured with peculiar enjoyments, my deceitful heart would be apt to be soon puffed up, and

I should quickly have need of a thorn in the flesh, or a messenger of Satan to buffet me; wherefore my request has been, that I may have grace and strength to walk humbly with my God. This day I again partook of the great ordinance of the Lord's supper. In it I had some discoveries of Christ's love, some warming rays, and some pleasant smiles, and I since hope I have got some fresh strength by it. The Lord grant, that as the prophet went in the strength of the food he had received forty days, I may not lose all the virtue and effects of this attendance, till the next comes; for it is through the enlivening influences of the Spirit of God that I stand, or else ordinances would in themselves be but empty things. — The Spirit of the Lord keep me after such solemn attendance and engagements! It is on him that I wholly depend, not in the least on my deceitful heart.

54. *March 14.* I am afraid I have made little or no advances in the last week; yet I have had some particular opportunities of communion with God, as especially on Thursday evening, when I retired to put up some requests to God for suppressing the force of my corruptions, which I perceive to be something turbulent, and for restoring the life, at least, for the gracious acceptance of the soul of a young person in our family dangerously ill. On both of these heads I was something enlarged; and I hope I was not disappointed in my intercessions. But not keeping a watchful guard over myself after the duty, I came into light company, and quickly became too much so myself. I think I have formerly met with this plain and apt comparison,

son, that the heart after earnest prayer, is like the body after some violent exercise, in a great heat: and therefore, when it is cooled too soon, there is danger of a cold; to prevent which, we should still keep on our motion. The person I spoke of departed this evening, which caused a great concern to all the family. The voice of God's providence in the present dispensation is, *Be ye also ready*. I hope it has had some influence upon me: I wish it may not wear off. I cannot but admire at the grace and patience of God to bear with and spare me so long, when he cuts off younger and better persons than myself. Hitherto I have been too much trifling as to my opportunities and privileges, but I have been again more earnestly entreating and begging the assistance of the Spirit and grace of God, in order to a general and speedy reformation. The Lord hear me begging in the name of Christ for that which I hope is agreeable to his will!

55. *March 21.* Our good and tender master, especially tender of our souls, of late has ordered our class to come to him in his study every Friday night, when he spends some time in prayer with us, and with two other young men, (one of whom is a minister), whom he has brought up; and, as he thinks fit, desires us to go to prayer by turns; and after this expects us every one to say something in answer to the question proposed to us, whatever it be: As, *What are the signs of an hard heart? What is most effectual for the cure of an hard heart? What are the advantages of a soft and tender heart?* Upon which at last he very profitably enlarges and expatiates:

in this opportunity, and especially in private prayer-immediately upon it, I hope I met with God.

56. *March 28.* The beginning of the last week, Monday and Tuesday, has *Ætas Aut. 16.* been as happy a time as any I have known. The enjoyment I have had of God in prayer, and the near communion I have been admitted to in private meditation, have, I bless God, been greater than ordinary. — My mind has been most heavenly, and this frame was much promoted by the light beginnings of a pain I had, which has since been very afflictive. The apprehensions I had of the issue of this pain, especially as it was of the same nature, though not to the same degree, with that which removed my above-mentioned school-fellow, made me very serious and thoughtful. On Wednesday, which was my birth-day, (my sixteenth year), which day I had before designed for more than ordinary serious employments, I was forced to yield and lie under my burden, having something of the ague with the other pain, and I have ever since been confined in body, though I bless God not in mind. —

The intercourse between heaven and my soul has not been interrupted. — What has given the uneasiness to my confinement is, that I have been debarred from the ordinances of the Lord's house, and especially from the Lord's table this sacrament-day. This is a call of Providence for better attendance on this ordinance. The Lord grant I may hear it!

57. *April 4.* The beginning of last week my distemper prevailed more and more, so that on Monday night I began in earnest to think of death

death and eternity; and, though perhaps there might not appear immediate danger, I endeavoured to prepare for the worst. I think I was somewhat better on Tuesday; but however I often set death before me, and I do bless God, it did not seem as a terrible monster, so as to affright me, but as a safe messenger to convey me home. Through mercy I had those good hopes through grace that suppressed all rising fears, and surpassed the terrors of death. The thoughts of going to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, overbalanced all that I could leave behind, and put me into an holy strait, *having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which would be far better.* Yet all my hopes were from free grace, and my entire dependence on Christ's righteousness and satisfaction. When I looked back or within to any thing of mine, I found all too short; but on Christ was hope, the anchor of my soul, most firmly fixed.

58. April 11. Through the goodness of God I have been in a great measure restored to my health the last week; yet I have still the remains of indisposition hanging upon me, which suppress the spirits, and clog their operations, and so make me indifferent and heartless to business. Thus have I been prevented of much of that enjoyment of God I would wish for in duty. Nevertheless the last Sabbath-day night, and at other times of the week past, but especially to-day, I have met with some communion with God. Oh! that it were more, and that the good effects of the late affliction were more evident! I must lament I have found some inclinations to forget the affliction, and let it wear off

off already, which I hope I have been humbled for and prayed against.

59. *April 25.* The week past has been no way extraordinary. Through mercy, it has not been a week of much backsliding or declensions, nor can I say it has been a week of much growth in grace, or any great advances; but it is not enough that I have not declined or gone backward. I would not be satisfied without some *weekly*, nay, *daily* progress. The seaman thinks it an unhappy day if he has not sailed on some leagues, though he has kept up his ship against the furious impulse of the winds and waves, which would have carried him a great way backward again, and perhaps cast the vessel on some pernicious rock. — The tradesman cannot live only by securing what he has gained. — Yet I bless God I have had some sweet opportunities of prayer the last week, and especially to-day, wherein I hope I have been much under the teaching of the Spirit, and been deeply humbled in prayer for the sins of my holy duties, and have most earnestly begged of God the assistance of his blessed Spirit in order to a reformation in this respect as well as in many others. — The Lord hear in heaven his dwelling-place!

60. *May 2.* Friday last I kept as a day of prayer, though I performed my other business, and, I bless God, I was abundantly enlarged in the duty, especially in humiliation; I hope I wrestled with God for the subduing the remaining power of indwelling sin, for the carrying on the work of grace, and for the thorough renovation of my nature, for freedom from the

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fetters of corruption, and for an importunate spirit of prayer. For these things, and for preparation for, and communion with God in the ordinance of the Lord's supper that lies before me, I hope I have in some measure prevailed in my requests. I desire to engage the intercession of my Advocate and Mediator, who can do more with one word than I with ten thousand.

61. *May 16.* Yesterday, when I retired by myself for meditation, I admired and adored the amazing patience of the Father, the astonishing love of the Son, and the wonderful and unchangeable faithfulness of the Spirit: each of these have I requited with the worst ingratitude. After these humbling and heart-melting considerations, I could see there was hope, and good hope through grace. I mourned *like the doves in the valley*. I could sit down, as it were, by the streams of Christ's blood, and there weep over my sins, and at the same time see that before me which was effectual to atone for and cleanse from sin. I could place myself at the foot of the cross of Christ, and there lament the hainousness and ingratitude of my sins, and then look up to Christ hanging on the cross, and satisfying for sin, *in whom, I hope, I have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* And thus through mercy I had a sweet opportunity. Oh! that I had more such! I have also cause to bless God for his presence this day: I have been very earnest for the presence and assistance of his Spirit in a journey that lies before me to-morrow, and all next week. I have been more than ordinarily importunate, because

because I have always found travelling seasons to be ensnaring seasons. It is hard to keep the heart with God at such times. I hope the Lord will hear and answer.

62. *May 23.* Through the kind and constant assistances of the good Spirit of grace, the last week has been extraordinary, considering it was a travelling week. Very sweet meditations have I had on the journey, and some pleasant seasons for prayer. My meditations were mixed with ejaculations; and the truths which the Spirit, I hope, brought to my remembrance, afforded me matter of enlargement, and food for contemplation. On Wednesday I heard a sermon, to which I gave not that lively attention I ought to have done, neither did it leave that lasting impression and abiding favour which I desire every ordinance might do; for this I was much humbled that night, and begged it might not prove a leading step to declension, and through grace it did not. It is of dangerous consequence to overlook the least chink by which the ship gradually leaks. — It is easier to stop than to empty. The day after was a comfortable day, in which I reflected on what I had heard the last week; but the chief theme of my contemplations was salvation by grace, by free grace; and by these reviews I hope God did, as I have been earnestly begging of him the last week, teach me to profit. And it is he alone can do this. Thus did I not lose those hours which my journey and travelling required. This happiness and convenience the Christian has, that his merchandize and trade to heaven may go on without interruption. The

trader of this world, be he never so diligent and industrious, is hindered and loses half his time at least, in eating, sleeping, travelling, diverting himself, &c. but the heavenly merchant is not by these called off his business, if his mind be spiritually renewed and sanctified. When he sleeps, his heart wakes, and he then converses with his Beloved. In journeying his meditations on God and heaven are sweet. The worldly merchant is idle sometimes, and waits for the arrival of his ship that he may be employed, but the heavenly trader has the most speedy passage, and the quickest returns. In the morning by prayer he may send for supplies, and in the evening by meditation he may meet with the Spirit, with his hands full of the fruits of Canaan, out of which *fulness he may receive, and grace for grace.*

63. *June 13.* Last night I was in a very dull low frame, to such a degree that I began almost to question the spiritual life, and the new birth in me; but this word comforted me, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* This frame continued till morning, and then, as I was reading, I met with these words, *God our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ who is our hope.* I thought, however imperfect my duties were, and however partial my obedience, my expectations were not from them, nor my dependence upon them, but *Christ is my hope. This hope I have as an anchor of my soul sure and stedfast;* this stays my soul against the surging billows, and tumultuous waves.

64. *June 20.* The last week, through my negligence, has been a very indifferent one. The first occasion of my declension was deferring

ferring morning-prayer too long, so that when I came to it, I found a strange lukewarmness upon me, and I went to prayer as at other times, but, like Samson, I wist not that the Lord was departed from me. The week also was a week of public vanity, and last Thursday I returned home to my old acquaintance, and with them I was taken up and diverted from a close walk with God. This I have been humbled for in prayer several times, especially last night and to-day: and I have been most thoroughly affected, and most heartily concerned for my sins and ingratitude, when I have had some hopes of their pardon through my Advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ the righteous*. The patience of the Father has humbled me, the love of the Son has overcome me, and the faithfulness and constancy of the Spirit, have quite melted my heart: yet I am afraid I am so bent to backsliding, I shall at length force, by my grieving him, the Holy Spirit to take a long, though not a final, farewell. God's justice in which would not be so strange, as his grace is admirable in returning. Through mercy, the Sabbath has been none of the worst. The Lord help me in the great work of redeeming my time, because the days are evil!

65. June 27. The last week I have been in an uncommon frame; I have not had those free intercourses, nor that sweet communion with God, that I have sometimes enjoyed, and yet I have been earnest after them. I have often begged for them, in order to prepare for the great ordinance I partook of to-day. I find the Spirit of God, though never so tender, is often forced

forced to shew his resentment, and that, though he overlooks so much weakness, passes by so many transgressions, and pardons so many sins, though he puts up so many slights and affronts, and bears with so many injuries and provocations, yet his perfect holiness does nevertheless abhor what is sinful, and that *he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*. And thus there is a necessity of shewing his displeasure, that so I may not abuse his patience, by turning the grace of God into wantonness. This would be the highest degree of ingratitude, and therefore I beg that the goodness of God may lead me to repentance.

I was this week in imminent danger of death by going into a place in the river I was unacquainted with. Before I went from the place where I had received this merciful deliverance, I knelt down, and returned hearty thanks and praises to God for saving me from going down into the pit, and begged that all my days might be spent in his service.

67. *July 4.* The last week I think has been somewhat better than the week before, though not much. I have had no extraordinary enjoyments, neither have I recovered the favour of the best things, which was upon my spirit when I was last at home. Thus I find myself deceived in my hopes and expectations, that (seeing God had then begun to smile upon my soul, and with the fructifying dews of his Spirit and grace had brought my heart into a condition, like that of the spring) I should still grow more fat and flourishing in the courts of my God. But instead of this I am afraid there is a winter coming,

ming, which may strip me of my leaves, shake down my fruit, make bare my branches, dry up the spirituous substance of the tree, or at least make it retire invifible to the root. Some of these doleful effects of winter I have already found. The Lord fend an early return of the fpring-time, and, by the operations of his Spirit, excite my fpiritual powers, and not only may he fir up my powers, for this will effect little, but let the Holy Spirit himfelf perpetually and inceffantly actuate my foul, and by his influences change as well as create, and increafe as well as cherifh a fpiritual life in me. From this day let the Lord blefs me! Thefe things I have earneftly prayed for, and do earneftly pray for, and for thefe things I beg ftill that God would *pour down upon me the Spirit of grace and fupplication.*

68. July 11. Laft Sabbath-day night, after I had wrote the laft, I was more than ordinarily humbled before the Lord, upon the confideration of my innumerable defects and transgreffions in fpiritual things, for my lukewarmnefs and indifferency in duty, and barrennefs under ordinances and fpiritual opportunities, but efpecially for the unregeneracy of my heart in fo great a meafure, for the ftrength and power of indwelling fin, which breaks out and fhews itfelf in thought, word, and act, in heart and life, in prompting to fin, in oppofing the work of grace, and that efpecially by grieving the Spirit, and fo caufing frequent declenfions. — Thefe fins in *general* and *particular* were laid open before me, fo that I think I was caft as low in my own fight as ever. Withal I had fome ftrange temptations

temptations and suggestions that perplexed me, great apprehensions of impending judgments, which lay as a dead weight upon my spirits, and made me cry out, considering my deserts, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.* These apprehensions have continued for the greatest part of the week; what they mean, I know not; yet, blessed be God, I have been earnest with him, that, if there is an impending storm, it may be blown over. *Monday* was a good day, especially about evening, when I went forth to retire for meditation and private prayer. Here I had as deep a sight of my own sinfulness, and at the same time as bright a display of the grace of God in Christ, as most I ever had; wherein I was brought to that blessed strait between two, *having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is necessarily far better, hoping, that for me to die was gain,* Phil. i. 21. 23. This hope I had wholly from my Advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ the righteous,* 1 John ii. 1. on whom *are laid the iniquities of all,* Is. liii. 6. nay, *ALL the iniquities of ALL.* *Tuesday* was pretty well, — *Wednesday* much declining. In the evening we had, as usual, a meeting for prayer; in this duty my heart was vain. Here I contracted my guilt, and hence I carried an heavy spiritual burden of that guilt I had contracted. This I could not shake off till I came to the above-mentioned place, (*the place where he went forth for meditation and prayer*), where I have often discharged myself of my painful pressures. Here I prayed twice or thrice before I came away, with some intermission for stricter examination

amination of my heart; and here I poured forth my whole soul unto God, wrestling with him, as the Lord enabled me, and pleading, with all the earnestness and importunity I was capable of, the name of Christ for the pardon of my sins, especially backsliding sins, and for the purging and cleansing of my soul from all corruptions, especially carnal-mindedness. The Lord hear in heaven his dwelling-place! But such is the unaccountable inconstancy and mysterious deceitfulness of my heart, that, between that time and Friday, I had lost my praying frame, and was become quite lukewarm again. *My heart is desperately wicked*; I profess I do not, nor can I know it. Sometimes I am ready to hope it is a receptacle and temple of the Holy Ghost; anon I find it a cage of unclean birds, and of vain thoughts. And now, having such an instance of its desperate wickedness, I went again on Friday night to this place, and threw myself in the most humble manner I could at God's feet, in the posture of the publican, crying, *God be merciful to me a sinner.* — Not that I thought any posture or gesture could merit divine pity and compassion, much less procure God's pardon. — And thus I begged, as for my life and soul, God's pardoning and purifying, justifying and sanctifying grace, that *he would blot out mine iniquities as a cloud*; that, as he has promised, *A new heart also will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you, he would create in me a clean heart, and renew within me a right spirit.* I bless God I have since found some answers to prayer, and God's assistance by his Spirit to keep up my heart with
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him in duty, and this especially on Monday night, so that, *while I called he answered, and while I was speaking he heard.* And, if I had been diligent to improve that opportunity, and had followed God with prayers, as I did then desire to do, it might have been of great advantage to me; but, for the most part of this Sabbath, my heart and thoughts have been either cold or vain, with little spiritual life in them; I am afraid that word does in a great measure reach me, Gen. vi. 5. *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* And how offensive this is to God, may be learned from ver. 6. *And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to the heart;* and, what is worst of all, the Lord resolves *that his Spirit shall not always strive with man;* yet there is some allowance of time, *his days shall be a hundred and twenty years,* that is, from that time to the universal deluge. And have I not reason to fear, that for my sins God has made some restriction of time, how long I may have such influences and assistances from his Spirit? Therefore God grant, that, in this my day, I may redeem my time! Heart-work is hard work. Indwelling sin is a long-lived enemy, its very dying struggles are mighty shocks; it languishes one day, and revives the next. One week it is subdued and routed, another week it attacks, assaults, and carries all before it. One while it can scarce act defensively, and again soon after it acts offensively, and is itself the aggressor. I desire this night and the week following

lowing to spread my case before God, as he shall enable me, and, as there appeared to Christ an angel from heaven strengthening him, when he prayed in the garden, so the Lord strengthen me by his Spirit *with strength in the inner man!* Is it not said, *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification?* Nay, does not Christ pray, *Father, sanctify them through thy truth?* Shall the will of God be withstood? Shall the prayer of Christ be denied? It can never be. — Is it thy will, my God, and is it not my will too? Is it Christ's prayer, and is it not my prayer too? Is it through inability in God to compass his will? Is it through the Father's disregard to his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, that this work of sanctification is not carried on upon me? No; God can as soon cease to be, as either of these should be.

69. July 18. I am again forced to put my seal to those words, *that the heart is deceitful above all things*; and to that other word, *Without me ye can do nothing*. I find by woful experience, *that there is another law in my members warring against the law in my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin*; and this makes me again and again cry out, *O wretched man that I am!* On Sabbath-day night, after I had written the last, I did most earnestly beg of God, that he would *take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously*. Through mercy, Monday was a pretty good day, and I expected a better night, when I designed to retire for more private prayer, &c. as usual; but I met with something or another which delayed me for some time, till at last I took up with a frivolous excuse not to go

at all: nor did I only not go there to prayer, but I behaved myself with an airiness and levity more than ordinary that night; a conduct that could never be agreeable, but was now especially very unseasonable. This was the first unhappy loose I gave to corruption, which I have not been able wholly to recover till last night. Indeed on Tuesday night I did endeavour to do that I should have done on Monday night, but neglected; but it was too late, I had lost my spiritual strength and zeal; something I did in prayer, though little to the purpose. On Wednesday, having sought the Lord for his presence with me in that opportunity, through mercy it was otherwise with me than it has been for some time; and, had I followed God with prayer, I might then have recovered my lost ground, I believe; but that evening, and Thursday and Friday night too, I omitted it * by one means or another, though I designed it every night. I was earnest with God notwithstanding by myself at other times for his return, but I did not so thoroughly lay my case to heart till last night: for guilt, either through fear or shame, makes the soul shy of coming to God, and sets it at a greater distance from him, as well as under a darker cloud. But then I went with an heart heavy and sorrowful, somewhat as it became an heart laden with iniquity. My grief and shame, and, as the Spirit of God calls it, *confusion of face*, were such, that words were straitened, but groans were plenty. While I was musing and

* The author refers, as I understand him, all along in this section, to his retirement to a particular place in the fields, for meditation and prayer.

meditating

meditating on my own aggravated sinfulness, ingratitude, and inconstancy, of God's infinite patience, love, and faithfulness, the fire burnt, the fire of zeal against sin; the fire of love to an injured Lord, that was blown up by admiration of his unchangeable love, and insuperable grace, together with the fire of ardent longings and desires after the work of regeneration, and Christ's image formed in me. This fire was maintained by the fuel of humility, and a deep sense of inexpressible and inconceivable sin in my soul; and a long time it was that I was under these overwhelming thoughts of sin, before God shewed me any clear distinct views of pardon. Yet all along did I endeavour to look to Christ the rock that is higher than I, resolving, if he slew me, I would trust in him. And, though sin did appear so exceeding sinful, as indeed it is really so, and more than I could see it to be, yet I durst not think but the blood of Christ would cleanse me from all sin, would atone for every transgression, and *that he was able to save to the uttermost.*

70. *August 1.* I have need to be more than ordinarily careful, seeing afflictions are in the family; no less than six are indisposed at once. I can hear others groan, surely then I should praise. Others are confined to sick beds, sure then I should retire to prayer: my turn may be next; that it was not the first, is owing to God's mercy. I desire to be preparing for sickness and death too. Before I have the experience of another week, in all probability I shall taste of the cup; and if it must be so, *not my will, but thine, Father, be done. The Lord teach me so to number*

ber my days, as to apply my heart to wisdom, that I may be ready when the Son of man comes; and through grace in Christ Jesus (in Christ Jesus, I say, and cannot say so too often) I hope, as my death, so my salvation is now nearer than when I believed.

71. *August 15.* This day I have had some gentle touches of the finger of God's hand; what they may issue in, I do not know. I have been desiring to prepare for a great affliction, nay, for death itself if God will have it so, but have little more than desired it, if it be the will of God, I desire it may be only sorrow at night, and that joy may come in the morning, or, at most, an affliction not unto death, but for the glory of God: however, not my will, but thine be done! I see great mountains of sin before me, and strong armies of indwelling sin within me, and to have a pardon of the former more fully given out, and the conquest over, or at least the weakening of the latter, are the ends of my desire to be spared: otherwise I think I should be indifferent. Yet for all this I dare not despond, or doubt of the efficacy of Christ's redemption. This would be adding to the number of my sins, one of the greatest of all sins: I wholly depend on my Advocate, and grasp eagerly at this hold, quitting all other foundations, and forsaking all other hopes. Christ's merits I plead; but as for any other, I dread them as death, and abhor and fly from them as hell, for this certainly will be the portion of their cup who build upon them. Lord, *increase my faith*, and then shew me all my sins, and let the redundancy of Christ's atonement;

onement and obedience answer for my extraordinary transgressions and deficiency.

72. *September 19.* According to my expectations it has pleased God to visit me with this distemper which has been in the town and family for some time, of which I was one of the last who fell sick. God has been exceeding tender and merciful in his dealings with me, and my distemper has wanted that violence with which it has been attended in others. All along I could not but admire God's gentleness in his corrections of me: and I bless God, that, when the distemper was at the height, I have had such strong consolations from within, such lively fights of God's glory and assurances of Christ's love, that I have almost forgot my outward infirmities, and could even sing to think my distemper was the way to my heavenly Father, my dear Redeemer, and beloved Comforter; the way to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and (which sums up all) to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling. In a little time it pleased the Lord to bless means for my recovery, though it was but slow and gradual. Since it has pleased God to spare me from going down into the pit, I would be earnest and importunate with God for sanctifying the affliction, and would not let him go, except he bless me. I am far from finding a freedom from old corruptions, and by the vanity of my mind (which

I lament and bewail) I find, that, while I am present in the body, I am absent from the Lord in too great a measure. I have also many infirmities to pray against. Being sent for home for change of air, and my father having occasion to take a long journey, his office in the family was in many respects devolved on me, as praying in the family, &c. which public service being unusual, was performed very poorly in God's esteem, however my fellow-creatures may think of it. The infirmities of fear, and too much modesty kept back the heart in too great measure. I drew near with my lips, and I was forced always, after such times, to go and bewail my case before God in private, desiring the assistance of the Spirit; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there is liberty, and liberty of speech* in particular.

73. *October 10.* This week has been as the common course of my life; I have both cause of thankfulness and of humiliation. On Tuesday and Wednesday I was cooling in my affections, and somewhat declining in spiritual communion; but on Wednesday night I began to discern it, and to be seriously concerned about it; and then, as also many times since, I was sensibly and deeply affected with my non-proficiency; and the thoughts of two holy seasons of the Lord's supper so little improved, though not altogether lost, cut my heart, and melted it into deep repentance. Yet, when I am in the depths of godly sorrow, I bless the Lord my state is not clouded, but pardon, nay assurance in part, is clearest sometimes, when my heart is softened with repentance, and laid low with humility;

military; for my faith, I bless God, does solely rely upon Christ's worthiness, and therefore is not shaken by my own failings. The latter part of the week (from Wednesday) has been more comfortable, though, in my best frames, I desire to become nothing, nay, less than nothing in my own esteem, that Christ may be all in all. I have been long desiring to be acquainted both with God and with myself, that I may be holy and humble together. Pride is what I dread above most sins. This effectually prevents near communion with God, and any high attainments in grace. As I desire growth in grace in general, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, I desire increase of humility, lest, being favoured of God, I should be ungratefully puffed up, and so fall into the snare of the devil, **PRIDE**; which I hate as the devil, and fear as hell. This evening, as I was thinking of my own inconstancy, fearing that I should one day fall by Satan, and that my own corruptions would be too hard for me; and, upon this account, wished to be, where I shall be out of all danger, in Christ's bosom; I considered that this was *unbelief*. *I was afraid I should fall*, I said; what did that mean? Was my fear *from myself*, or *as to God*? From myself I needed not to have said I feared, for I was sure I should fall. And then to doubt of God's power and faithfulness, *who is ever mindful of his covenant*, was great distrust: Therefore I was desirous to trust, and *wait the few days of my appointed time, till my change come*.

74. October 17. This week I have been engaged in the combat of the flesh and spirit, have

been in the field of battle, and through grace Have been enabled to maintain the fight. I bless God I have not met with any thing to shake my hopes in Christ, as to my state, but yet I have been harassed by the insurrections of corruption within, stirred up by the enemy without. I have fought the Lord's battles but poorly, and wanted much vigour in my oppositions; yet the blessed Spirit of God has enabled me to keep my guard against so furious an enemy, so vastly superior in strength, and who so far outreaches me in his wily cunning; that so, *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, strength* may be produced, *to still the enemy and the avenger.* All my power lay in prayer, by which the spiritual enemy is best quieted and conquered. I have often been exceedingly troubled at the remaining power of sin, and often repeated supplications at the throne of grace for the extirpation of it. Satan has sometimes foiled me, and brought me upon my knees; but there I have been enabled to fight most manfully, and I have *striven with* God and Satan in different respects at the same time. Oh! that it had been more vigorously! I have been desirous to be discharged out of this war, but yet willing to wait the Lord's time, only entreating constant and suitable supplies of God's grace, that I may not fight as one *who beats the air*, but do somewhat to the purpose. This is my comfort and support in this fight, how sharp soever it may be, the victory in the end is certain, as certain as that God is true. I will then wait with patience, and be content to *groan a while, being burthened.* Yesterday, having first sought to God
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by prayer for his assistance, I resolved to set the afternoon apart for retired meditation, for which I took a long solitary walk: I bless God I was not alone, for the Father was with me; nay, by the Spirit, I hope, *I had fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. It was one of the pleasantest afternoons I ever enjoyed, and, which is strange and unusual to me, the enemy was so chained up, and my soul so assisted by the Spirit of God, that I had little or no inclination to think of, or regard any thing but what was serious, and, as says the psalmist, *My meditations on him were sweet. But not unto me, not unto me*, but to the grace of God be the praise. The Lord keep me still humble. I never desire in this world to be above a *broken and contrite heart* for sin.

75. *October 24.* On Thursday I had a very strong temptation, stronger than I had known a great while, to indulge myself in a diversion I hardly thought unlawful in itself, yet could scarce deny it to be inexpedient in its consequences. This my conscience hesitated at upon the consideration of that word, *Abstain from all appearance of evil*. I considered the matter upon my knees once or twice, and here did the temptation dare to plead its own cause, and I must confess I had a great inclination to what was offered: Yet, considering how I had suffered by sin, and how far from a due and suitable tenderness my conscience was, that I could so long hang in suspense about what I suspected to be evil, and, begging the strength of God, I was enabled to deny myself in part, and so the temptation dropt. Yet afterwards, I could not

but be greatly sorry and ashamed, that I had manifested so little fear of sin and zeal for God in the case as to stay hesitating so long. The Lord help me to shew another sort of spirit, if the temptation should be offered again, which is very probable! Now I find the Holy Spirit was grieved, and resented my indifferency in this and other respects, and kept at a greater distance the following part of the week; which opportunity the enemy improved, especially in confounding and distracting me in duty, to that degree, that, with shame and tears I mention it, last night I was upon my knees the best part of an hour, almost drowned by a deluge of vain thoughts, before I could do any thing in prayer which I designed, though I tried at the duty several times, and was still borne down, and so restrained, that I could scarce utter words, however not accompany them long with my heart; till God took pity upon me, sent me help, delivered me from under the paws of the enemy, and enlarged me by his Spirit; so that, having thrown myself in the most humble prostrate manner I could at God's feet, I did heartily supplicate his pardon of, and help against indwelling sin. This I have most earnestly done to-day too, especially this evening, as well as all the week before; but God seems as yet to suffer indwelling sin, though I have sometimes had some persuasions of faith that he will answer me. This day also for the most part, in divine service, have I been vain in my thoughts. I profess I know not what to do, I am in a sad strait and uneasiness to be freed from this body of sin. *Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from*

*from the body of this death! My heart is overwhelmed within me, yet will I look to the rock which is higher than I, for pardon and deliverance. I cannot bear with this course, thus to offend my God, and destroy my peace. I have gone again and again to God for relief, and still sin prevails, yet will I wait for the Lord, and in his word will I hope. I will nevertheless call upon God as long as I live, for I have found him a God that hears prayer. The vision is for an appointed time, it will come, and will not lie, and will not tarry. I cannot but desire to depart, and be with Christ. ——— Death, or any thing that will free me from this body of sin. ——— Such prevalencies of it as to interrupt my duties, and destroy my peace by guilty infirmities, I must expect while here; ——— but such exorbitant corruptions! ——— for Jesus sake, deliver me, O God, ——— remove them from me, or me from them. If there is no other way but by my dissolution, sweet Jesus, come. I would not live another week under such furious assaults of indwelling sin, without greater strength from God for opposition, for the world. Were it any thing but sin, I durst not be so bold; were it a mere temptation of any sort, I could not be so importunate for deliverance; *The will of the Lord be done.* But it cannot be *God's will* that I should be still conquered by the enemy, and still breaking my peace with heaven. *Oh! send me help out of the sanctuary, strength out of Zion,* fresh and suitable supplies from thy Spirit; and then I am content, if it be thy will, to stand it out a little longer! *Oh! leave me not thus! I have been earnestly begging for these blessings*
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with my whole soul, wrestling with God, I hope, telling him positively and humbly, that *I would not let him go except he blessed me.* I hope in God he hath heard me pleading Christ, and Christ pleading for me in an acceptable time ; and that, though I seem to be thus left of God, yet that he cannot forget me : in this am I safe and happy. Oh ! that I may never forget him ; Oh ! that he was ever with me !

76. *October 31.* This week has been something better than the last, but still I am but a poor unexperienced babe in Christ, *less than the least of all saints, and not worthy to be called a saint, nay, the chief of sinners.* Through grace I see myself to be so ; and, if the grace of God saves me at last, which however I cannot but hope it will, I shall be *a pattern of all long-suffering in God ;* and methinks, if it would any way contribute to the glory of his grace, I could be willing all my sins were published before angels and men, before all the world, that I might be an instance of the infinite and almighty efficacy and virtue of the grace of Christ. But though I am thus vile, I have hope through grace ; such hope I have had at the Lord's table to-day, and I bless God I am seldom without something of it ; for, was not this the strength of my heart, I do not know where I should sink. Strip me of this, and I have not the least relief in the world, but am certainly cut off. As for my duties, I am ashamed of them ; for, were they tried by God's holiness, they would not stand for themselves, much less atone for sin, and merit favour ; nay, were they brought forth to light, I should be confounded, Therefore on thee, O Jesus, who art almighty

to save, whom God has made strong for himself, and strong to bear the wrath of God for souls, do I venture my soul ; but no venture at all on such a sure foundation. Here I rest, and stay my whole soul, a sinking soul, under whose weight the shoulders of an archangel would bow. My encouragement to-day, before and at the Lord's table, was this word, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* I come a soul laden with iniquity, moving heavily with it, and labouring hardly under it, to Christ for relief. This is thy promise, dear Jesus ! Thy ministers tell me, and thy word assures me, that thou art as ready to give grace as any soul can be to receive it. Have I not desired it ? Have I not asked it, and that from my whole soul ? Whence then is it that I do not receive it ? But observe God's word says, *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, to consume it upon your lusts.* And is this the end of my asking ? Is it not the direct reverse, even grace to consume my lusts ? I ask believingly, I ask heartily in the name of Christ. But Satan tells me all is not right ; *Thine heart is not right in this matter.* Why ? other foundation can no man lay than what I lay, even Jesus Christ the rock of ages, on whom whosoever believes, he shall not be ashamed. *Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts !*

77. November 7. Notwithstanding the great evil I have seen in sin, and the great hatred I have cherished against it lately, and notwithstanding the great ordinance of the Lord's supper, which I so lately attended upon, my experiences this week of my own failings, weakness,

ness, and coldness in religion have been so many, that it is with sorrow of heart I set about writing them, or at any time reflect upon them. So little abiding influence had the ordinance upon me, to my shame and sorrow do I speak it, that, being cunningly ensnared by a temptation, the very next day I began to decline. The temptation was, as Satan's first attacks used to be, to a trivial diversion, which at convenient times, and, if not inexpedient in its consequences, is in itself I think innocent; though, as then circumstanced, not so; for it was too soon after such a solemnity; and I cannot but say, I had some warnings of conscience; such as these, *Who knows but this may be a temptation offered to seduce me? Is it not safest to abstain from any appearance of danger?* &c. But it being a most refined temptation, it took, and has thrown me into a lukewarm indifferent frame of spirit ever since, though I have had some revivals sometimes. Thus have I lost and bewildered myself, having had but few divine smiles this week; but, instead of this experience, there has been a kind of distance and strangeness which I heartily lament, for this I would count as bad as death; for how could it be worse with me to be annihilated, than to be made immortal, without the enjoyment of God in Christ? Without my Jesus, a paradise would be a prison, and crowns and sceptres would be as links and fetters. It is the Lamb, the light of heaven, who makes heaven to be heaven. Without his presence duty has been almost a burden, and I have been so overpowered, that when I have shut my eyes to diverting objects, and stopped my ears to
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distracting sounds, Satan has found secret avenues to my heart.

78. *November 14.* As to the last week, I can give no very comfortable account; but it pleased God to humble me for my hardness and insensibility, and to break my heart into deep repentance yesterday. I now see that it is not guilt that causes a genuine repentance; that may strain some sighs, and perhaps fetch out some iron tears, but repentance is never free and evangelical, till there is a sight of pardon to be had with God; that is, an hope of forgiveness in the general, though perhaps a particular application of it is not yet practicable; and then, when there is seen forgiveness with God, he is feared and will be loved. I had before bewailed the hardness of my heart, and now brought it to the blood of Christ, which alone could dissolve this adamant. Now sin was brought to my remembrance, and I could easily mourn, and repent, and abhor myself as in dust and ashes. This I did heartily, I bless God, twice yesterday, as also to-day too; and now the clouds began to break a little, which have hung long over me. Here I set sight of my Beloved, of whom I have been long in search, and oh! how welcome is he to me, and how precious is one smile after so long an estrangement! It is like the smiling morn which disperses the dismal shades of night.

79. *November 28.* Hard work have I found it to keep my heart with God this week. I have stood the force of many furious shocks of temptations, and have been often ready to give ground, but yet, through the grace of God, I

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have commonly retreated in pretty good order. I have found Satan excessively busy with a different temptation every evening, just at the time which I particularly set apart for devotion, prayer, and meditation, with some serious reading. Here I have found *the dragon casting out of his mouth water as a flood*, that is, a deluge of vain thoughts after me, that he might cause me to be carried away by it; but the Spirit of God has helped me, *as the earth helped the woman*. I have had some comfortable thoughts from the consideration of these words, *He hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all*. Who has laid? God the Father, him whom I had offended by sin; him to whom alone I was responsible for sin, and him of whom alone I was afraid because of my sin. He it was who imputed my sin to Christ, nay, not only imputed it, but has exacted satisfaction for it from him; and this satisfaction is really and fully made for the iniquities of us all, and all the iniquities of us all; the iniquities both of gross aggravations, and of infirmity. God in justice will not require a double satisfaction from me and Christ too, since he has declared himself fully appeased by that which Christ made. Therefore in the Lord my righteousness will I glory, being thus justified. I have also received much comfort from the consideration of that other word, while I was endeavouring to prepare my heart for the ordinance of the Lord's supper; *Oh! Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help found*; and other passages like this.

This is some satisfaction to me, that, though so many vanities intrude in religious worship, I
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can say, if a crown or a kingdom were offered me, I durst not deliberately harbour one vain thought, so as to allow of it. Thus I find it is *no more I, but sin that dwells in me*, from which I so desire to be released, either partially here, or completely in heaven. Were it but partially weakening, and that continually, I should be satisfied, but when shall this be? One of the two, either a partial or a complete deliverance, I must have, and, O Lord, how long? I cannot but repeat the words of an hymn I have met with.

*Never weather-beaten sail,
More willing bent to shore,
Never tired pilgrim's limbs,
Affected slumber more
Than my wearied spirit longs,
To fly out of this troubled breast;
Oh! come quickly! Oh, come quickly,
Oh! come quickly, dearest Lord,
And take my soul to rest!*

80. *December 5.* This has been an uncommon week; for the greatest part, the Sun of Righteousness has been wading under a cloud. I have found how unsatisfactory every thing below is to a poor soul that wishes for, yet wants the immediate views of God's love and favour, although perhaps there may be no heavy guilt upon the conscience neither. Alas! I have betook myself to one thing and to another; but, like Noah's dove, I have found no rest to the sole of my foot, till I have returned back to Christ my ark again. Every creature, and every sublunary enjoyment, I find, says the same thing, *Satisfaction is not in me.* In this wilderness I

look about me, and see what I fancy to be a *mountain of spices*, and perhaps wander out of my way to it; but when I come at it, I find it to be really a *mountain of leopards*. I look to one receptacle and another, and fancy it to be something like a *shadow of a great rock in a weary land*; I make to it, and it proves a *den of lions*. I have a fancy to some verdant couch, and take it to be *the green pastures*, and lay me down on it; but am quickly raised by its proving a *bed of adders*, and all manner of *dangerous serpents*. Thus I find that I can be certain of nothing here, but uncertainties. While I am in this wilderness, I am apt to be trying every object; but, when they are proved, they all say, *This is not your rest, because it is polluted*; why then do I loiter so in this wilderness, wandering up and down in it? Why do I not rather make haste out of it, seeing my way lies through it? I have been a long time in it; I might have got past most of the rugged brakey ways by this time, had I plied my journey. When I compare myself with the most eminent instances of God's patience and grace in scripture, I cannot but think I outdo them all. Paul, it is true, was a great sinner at first, as well as I; but then the grace and Spirit of God had never to do with so stubborn and perverse a child, when it wrought upon him, as since it has begun upon me. Paul, when first awakened, was in a few minutes a sincere penitent and suppliant for grace, in a few days a true believer, in a few weeks an experimental preacher, and in a few years as eminent a Christian as the church of God could ever boast of. Here is
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improvement indeed, but what have I done? Mary Magdalen, out of whom Christ cast seven devils, suddenly reforms, and signalizes her repentance and humility by *washing Christ's feet with her tears, and wiping them with the hair of her head*: she has Christ's own testimony, *that she loved much, as much was forgiven her*. Her generous mind does wonders, with her narrow circumstances, in performing a royal ceremony upon Christ, which he himself has eternized in history; she followed Christ to crucifixion, when his other disciples deserted him, she was one of the first who visited his sepulchre, and staid last there, looking down into it, and weeping as she looked; she saw the angel first, and certainly her affectionate inquiry for Christ, of Christ himself, must be very pleasing to him; she was encouraged by angels, and she first saw Christ after his resurrection, and brought the blessed message to his other disciples, for which she may be said to have first preached the gospel. Again, the man *who was possessed with a legion of devils*, was presently clothed, and in his right mind; and for this great deliverance, his heart was so won and united to Christ, that by his good will he would never have left him; but yet, understanding Christ's pleasure, he submitted to return to his friends; but his sense of Christ's love to him, constrained him to blazon his name and his great works in every city and country he went through, and he made it his business to commend Christ to every body. Here is some gratitude shining in the most notorious of sinners, but where is mine? Oh wretched me! grace never was, and never will be proved

to be infinite, by its dealings with any soul more than mine. Last night I endeavoured seriously to spread my case before God, and was instant with him for some relief to my dejected spirits; and, having laid down my sins and myself at his feet, and implored his pardon and favour entirely on Christ's account, (for I did protest before God and angels, I was so far from pleading my best duties, or having any dependence upon them, that I did abhor myself before God for the pollutions of them), God was pleased to break the clouds, and dart in a smile upon me, and I could, with some lively acts of faith, answer that thundering word, *The soul that sinneth shall die*, with this comfortable sound, *Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world*: as also that other word, *Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace*, was an argument for prayer and for comfort to me. This morning my hope was rather confirmed to me than allayed, and I experienced those smiles of God's countenance which I have been long waiting for. I, who have for some time in a great measure sat in darkness, did now see a great light: my sails were now up for the heavenly voyage, and the blessed Spirit seemed to breathe such gentle gales as wafted me comfortably along. This frame, through the goodness of God, has continued in some measure all the day. In the afternoon, in hearing some expressions referring to the state of glory, my affections were raised by some tastes, as I hope, of the glory which should be revealed. When I looked up to the elements, methought I could have wished to have seen them melting with fervent

vent heat to make way for my dear Lord coming in glory on the clouds of heaven. Methought I could have put on such an unfeigned smile as I never did before. To-night I have been endeavouring to engage my heart still more firmly with God by prayer. I met with some communion with God, I hope it was so much as set me a longing for more, and yet made me cry out, *How little a portion of him do I know?* But I cannot, in the midst of these gracious smiles, but be jealous over my own heart with a godly jealousy; this makes me commit myself more earnestly to the keeping of God's Spirit; *his grace is sufficient for me*, and therefore I desire to go on with an humble faith, *coming with boldness to a throne of grace*, and at the same time *I desire to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling*. A constant frame consisting of these two ingredients, is the only happy and desirable composition while in this life.

81. *January 2. 1715.* This day I attended upon the Lord at his table, and I hope not without affection, though not altogether without distraction, though blessed be God less than at some times. My repentings were kindled together, and while I was musing and reflecting, the fire burned in love and indignation at the same time. My desires were encouraged by that word, *Open now thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*. Nothing but an infinite god would satisfy. My faith was confirmed by the Pharisee's accusation, and my honour, *This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them*; otherwise what had I to do at the sacramental table? When I was in
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care for the wedding-garment of righteousness at Christ's marriage-supper, my comfort was from his name, who shall be called *Jehovah our righteousness*, and from the consideration of Christ's guests in the parable that were to be compelled to come in. They were to be gathered from the streets, lanes, and hedges, such, as I have heard to-day, as were despicable, ignorant, and notoriously sinful. *Despicable* I am for my mean and base attire, and for which persons are used to be despised; I am *despicable* for my uncouth mien, and disingenuous deportment, favouring that which is earthly, when the generous Christian mind should seek those things which are above. *Ignorant* I am in a great measure in that knowledge besides which I should determine to know nothing comparatively, namely, *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*; and, to say no more, I am every way *notoriously sinful*; and does Christ mean to have his house filled with such as these? Oh! admirable free grace!

Before I close, I cannot but take notice of one occurrence this night, and that is, I was by my father put upon going to prayer in the family; a thing I never did before in his presence, and I did, as much as I modestly could, peremptorily refuse, but was forced to comply with superior authority. In this duty I was most miserably daunted, and could not with all my endeavours get that liberty, which, as God's word tells me, is present *where the Spirit of the Lord is*: I was under sad restraints; but, however the exercise might seem to others, I would be most concerned in that I fear I was most defective in the devotions of my heart towards God, by reason

of the prevailing infirmity of what is call *bashfulness*. I could discover abundance of pride in fearing the mean apprehensions others might have of the external part of the duty. However, upon serious consideration, I can say, *He hath done all things well*. I cannot but see the wisdom of God; for not long ago, when I was put upon such a work before those, who, as one would have thought, would have more damped me, being more ready to criticise, and make the most of an infirmity, I was then, I bless God, much enlarged, and had a freedom of speech; but now, amongst my best friends, who would be ready to make the best of my performance, I was more left to myself. I have thought much of those words of Jeremiah since; *Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them*. Dismayed I was, and it was a great mercy I was not more *confounded*: for the future I desire to go in the strength of the Lord, depending on his Spirit to help infirmities, I am sensible an holy awe and fear of God is a great preservative against the fear of man in this respect as well as others, and hereafter I desire to make it my study to approve myself to God, leaving it to him whether I shall approve myself to men, or no.

82. *January 16.* I have put up my earnest prayers to walk in newness of life by the assistance of God's grace. Oh! that this new year a general reformation may commence with me! Lord, help me to a *new heart*, to begin this *new year* with! Thou sayest, *A new heart also will I give thee*. Oh, for such a new-year's gift from above! The words, which I have heard discoursed on to-day, were these, *If any man love not*

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the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha; words that in their sound are thunder, but in their import inexpressibly more terrible. The question was, *Who are they that love not the Lord Jesus Christ?* It was answered, those who do not love (1.) his word, (2.) his image, (3.) his government, (4.) his company, (5.) his service, and (6.) his house. As to the first, I hope I prize nothing more. As to the second, there is nothing the Lord knows I long for more. As to the third, there is nothing I approve of more. And as to the fourth, there is nothing delights or refreshes me like it. The last particulars have humbled me most. As to God's service, I esteem it the greatest liberty, I prefer it to the greatest honour. But then as to the ordinances of Christ's appointment, though I would not lose them for the world, yet I am so cold and indifferent under them, and enjoy so little of Christ's presence in them, that plainly and truly I do not find those longings for their return I would fain have. When I read of Old-testament saints, particularly David, so highly prizing God's house, *wishing his tongue might cleave to the roof of his mouth, if he preferred not Jerusalem to his chief joy; declaring how he rejoiced when they said unto him, Let us go up to the house of the Lord; nay, envying the very sparrows their habitations near the temple*; I say, when I read all this, I am ashamed, nay startled, to find no such longing desires after public worship, nay more, for I will speak plainly and impartially, (begging of God also to search me), I have often been ready to say in my heart, *What a weariness is it?* Now, does not such a one as I deserve

serve to be kept short of spiritual opportunities, that I might know the worth of ordinances by the want of them? Most certainly, and it is infinite patience that can bear with this conduct. Indeed I have had much perplexity to find it thus with me, and the experience has cost me many a tear, and many doubts, as I hope it has put me upon praying at this time. I have formerly heard a distinction that has somewhat satisfied me, a Christian may be weary *in* God's service, but is never weary *of* God's service. Now, through grace I hope I have listed myself a volunteer in God's service, and would not be discharged or disbanded for the whole world; and yet I cannot say, *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!* with that thorough feeling and hearty affection that I would. The Lord put me into, and keep me in such an happy frame, that whenever he says, *Seek my face, my heart may answer, Thy face, O Lord, will I seek.* I cannot but think much of that word, *Thou meetest him who rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness*: so meet me, and so help me!

83. *January 23.* Here I have a melancholy part to write, and I could more readily sigh it over than write it out. It is I who must say, Surely I am more sinful, senseless, and brutish than any man! Last Tuesday I saw a friend of mine, whom I had not seen for a considerable time, and upon our meeting we took a diverting walk, and accidentally fell into company with a poor vain man, of that sort who are called *merry company*; and here, to my wounding, I indulged such an airiness and levity as I can by no means account for before God, or to my own

conscience. My discourse was very unguarded, and yet so sensible was I of it, that, had it not been that I thought I was unknown, I should never have indulged it; but airs of wit and pleasantry are very ensnaring to youth. *And what fruit had I of those things, whereof I am now ashamed?* Guilt I contracted, I wounded my conscience, and, woe is me, I grieved the blessed Spirit of God: though I confessed my sin to God, as soon as I found the ill consequences of my doings. On Wednesday night I humbled myself before God with somewhat of affection, yet healed the wound slightly, and found that God still stood at a distance. On Thursday I bewailed my condition most heartily, and desired to search thoroughly, and examine impartially the state of my soul, engaging Omniscieny with me. I laid the awful question before me, and put it to my soul to give an answer as in the presence of God; *How came I, since I have so much reason to think I was in the bonds of iniquity, to fancy I was not in the gall of bitterness, since the word of God joins them?* This was a trembling consideration to me: I stated the point in scripture-argument; *Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage;* I was so far from denying that I was sometimes overcome by sin and Satan, that I was almost ready to fear *I was carried captive by Satan at his will.* It was now my business to make some distinctions agreeable to the word of God. St Paul distinguishes between what he did with the consent of his soul and inward man, and what he did through the prevalency of the body of sin. *He delighted in the law of God af-*
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ter the inner man, but at the same time he saw another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. This is my case, I am sure; and, were it not for these instances in God's word, I should, taking my case to be singular, be ready to be quite discouraged: I approve of that which is good, I consent unto it that it is so, and I earnestly reach after it, and I as vehemently disallow of what I do. David owns, *Iniquities prevail against me*, but ventures to say, *As for our transgressions, thou wilt purge them away*. Therefore dare I not cast off all hope, but, however perplexed my state may be by sin and guilt, I come to this resolution in the Lord's strength, that *though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*. This I recall to mind, and therefore have I hope, that *Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. Through all the revolutions of my inconstancy, when my heart fails, my hopes decline, and I have no comfort from within; this is the strength of my heart, this holds my soul in life, nay, this is the very health of my countenance, that *I have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous*.

I cannot but admire the happy settlement of salvation; *To him who worketh not, but believeth on him who justifies the ungodly*. Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief! Salvation is of grace by faith, and faith is the gift of God: all is of God, and nothing is of myself. Methinks my whole soul goes out in nothing so much as ascribing the whole of my salvation to grace. It is Christ in me the hope of glory; Jesus is all in all, and what shall I say? (for I am lost in
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admiring him, and am straitened for words to express my entire dependence upon him.) He is all that is *increated*, and all that is *created* to me. What could I have to do with God without him? His power would be terrible to me, his holiness would upbraid my unlikeness to him; nay, what would it avail me if God was merciful and gracious, if at the same time there was no satisfaction given to his justice and holiness? Even, the charming appellation of God, *He is love*, could stand me in no stead, without the atoning and interceding mediation of Jesus Christ.

Ætas 84. March 27. Seventeen years are now gone; I wish they were not *lost* as *Aut. 17.* well as *gone*. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.* I have been now under declensions, now under afflictions: God might say, *Why should I smite him any more? he will yet revolt the more; he is joined to idols, let him alone.* I plainly see that nothing in the world, without the concurring influences of the blessed Spirit, will do good with me, and that these alone will make me happy. O holy and gracious God, deny not this Spirit to one who asks him with the greatest importunity of soul; I must have more than ordinary supplies from God's Spirit, or I am lost. The Lord condescend to my case, and measure out his supplies according to a poor creature's necessities rather than his deserts. I hope I have this evening *drunk of the brook by the way*; God grant I may go in the strength of this refreshment many days, till such another day comes. I bless God I have had some pronunciations of pardon and

and acquittance to my conscience. All is amazing grace, and wonderful condescension; I fear and hope, I dread and depend, and will God let me fall away from my profession, will he hide himself? I cannot bear it; it is a killing thought: I know my deceitful heart will delude me, I shall one day fall by the hands of Satan, these inbred corruptions will be too hard for me, if God give not extraordinary assistance. If I expect to stand, *I must in hope believe against hope*, and against all probability, and may well say, *Has it been so in the green tree, what will it then be in the dry?* and on the other hand, I know I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. If God will keep me, I defy all the temptations that hell can invent. Thus I despair in my own strength, and am confident in Christ's, and *happy is the man who feareth always, but he who trusteth his own heart is a fool*: and cannot I say, Lord, thou knowest that I abhor this! I am so far from trusting my heart, that I believe there was no wickedness ever committed in the world which it would not give into, did God leave it. The lesson I have to learn, which will carry me above many temptations when established into a principle, is in short this, *Study to approve thyself to God.*

85. April 17. Last Sabbath-day I deferred taking the account with a design to say at this time, that nothing extraordinary occurred in the week preceding the Sabbath. But I wish I had not satisfied myself with that excuse; it seems a sort of an inclination to a declension. I have often repented this last week of that neglect, which,

which, if the grace of God do not appear for me, may cost me dear. Oh this heart of mine! *Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?* What shall I do? Oh, the dead weight that holds me fast to this earth; Oh! the sins *which do easily beset me.* My heart is hard; I tremble and weep to think of the issue of these declensions, but it is but a fall of affections, and my heart chills and hardens again. Lord, help, or I perish; I begin to sink. O for the everlasting arm reached out! *Make no tarrying, O my God.* I own it freely and heartily, that I have forfeited the influences of the blessed Spirit, and it is a wonder of grace that God does not resolve he will no longer strive with me. How unkindly have I treated the heavenly guest within me till I have forced him to withdraw? How often has the tender Spirit gone away grieved? This my best friend in heaven or earth; Oh, my heart hates to think of the vile treatment! I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face; I loath and abhor myself, and again I must cry out, *Oh this heart of mine!* I will readily own that I cannot charge this strangeness between God and my soul upon the temptations I have met with, or any thing else. I will take all the shame to myself; it has been purely the falseness of my own base heart. Oh! for expressions, never was I more at a loss! nor do I conceive of half my vileness. Lord, discover more of my vileness to me, that I may be as humble as ever was one before thee! What a week has this been for the obstructions of intercourse between God and my soul! I may be said to *have lived without God in the world.*

world. I really wonder that God has not many times struck me dead upon my knees. Such strange sacrifices have I made, that Nadab and Abihu sure never deserved death as I have done. How unpleasant have all my studies been! Was it thus with me still, who could desire to live? Oh no more of this strangeness, dear Saviour, no more! I have begun it, do thou put an end to it. And will my Lord return? and will he put up all this? Never was grace like thine, never was faithfulness like thine!

86. May 8. This week has not had any thing extraordinary in any respect. Something of the presence of God with me I have had, but where is that near and uninterrupted communion? *When shall I set the Lord always before me, so as never to be moved?* I think I never was so deeply humbled before as I was this week, upon the consideration of the general lowness of my frame. This was the burden of the week, "What an abject life do I lead, being so much at a distance from my God? How mean are all my actings for want of affections set on things above? How much of my conduct from no principle, and how little with respect to the great designs of eternity, which I should be always carrying on?" Dear Jesus, no more of this strangeness, I cannot bear it, though I altogether cause it; either be near to me here, or lift me up to thy throne.

87. May 15. This week past has been an hurrying week, by reason of some journeys; as also somewhat uncomfortable, by reason of bodily indispositions. I have had some particu-

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lar seasons of the Spirit's assistance, as this evening especially, when, by reason of some conversation with my friends, my thoughts were led to what my relations have desired I might be, if it were the will of God, even (and with awe do I speak it, trembling at the thoughts of my unworthiness) *a minister of Jesus Christ*. I hope I had some solemn thoughts, something of a spiritual mortification and resignation to God's will, acknowledging myself to have no more in me to recommend me to God, (to use the expression however), for this great office and high calling, than the vilest of mankind upon earth: yet in an humble manner I am willing, if God would touch my lips with a coal from the altar, to say, *Here am I, send me*. And when God sends, he gives qualifications, which I humbly and entirely expect from him. Here is learning of diverse kinds, in the prosecution of which I rise up early and sit up late, yet I hope I can say with my whole soul, that my dependence is ten thousand times more upon the teachings of the Spirit than all this learning. I can deny all, and desire to disdain and condemn it, when it comes in competition with this one thing needful, this principal, nay, I may say, this Alpha and Omega, the teachings of the Spirit; these I wait for. Oh! may he descend in private communications! May these distil as the dew upon me as a private Christian, if God should never make use of me further. Lord, give thy Holy Spirit to one who asks him!

88. November 13. I have had of late some little revivings, as I thought, but now they
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are mostly, if not wholly lost. What shall I say? The Lord pity me; I reach and heave under these dead weights that lie upon me, but cannot get from under them. The strong man armed holds me fast, so that, unless somewhat more than any natural power interposes, thus I must lie: but the worst of it is, I do in a great measure lie in a stupid contentment. Though the weight is heavy, I do not enough feel it so, neither is it very burthensome to me. Oh miserable condition! The Lord help me! Could I but strive and struggle, and call in help from above, there were hope: Nay, could I only pray, and cry to God from a sense of my condition, I believe I should not continue long in it. Therefore now the first thing that I beg, and that I beg for as for my life, my eternal life, is a Spirit of prayer, *a Spirit of grace and supplication. Let this Spirit come forth from thy presence*, and let this Spirit prevail with thee, *so that the bones which sin has broken may rejoice!*

89. November 27. I have been thinking on my ways, and see a reformation very necessary, and at the same time I see my utter incapacity to effect it in myself; but I am not at a loss so long as there are treasures of grace and strength in Christ. Here would I make my applications: *I open my mouth wide, Lord, do thou fill it!* Through mercy, this Sabbath has been a pretty good one, and some thoughts of seriousness have possessed my mind through the whole day. Go on, O Lord, to be good, and let me have the same to say of the following week!

90. December 4. I look upon the wish with

which I concluded the last, and am ashamed, With reformation I might, and so I may again, and yet continue the same, so long as I carry this heart about me. Where is the reformation? Where is the newness of life? By degrees it is all lost, and that in a week's time. Oh the baseness of this heart of mine! What shall I do next? To God I must go again, where else can I go? Where else would I go? No where I think; and there I will go once more; Lord, help me to come aright, for then there would be hope!

Ætas 91. April 8. 1716. Often have I
Aut. 18. deferred my week's review, but never so long as now I have done. Sometimes I have had somewhat of an occasion, but now I have none; nothing but my negligence is the real reason, and my negligence in this part is generally a true indication of my negligence in other spiritual exercises. I have now been reading my experiences about this time last year, at which I have been somewhat affected: there I saw the holy fears, and genuine workings of a tender conscience; what a sense of sin, what fears of God's displeasure, what jealousies over my own heart, and what cries to God for his Spirit and grace? But where are they now? On the other hand, now I must say what stupidity as to sin, what unconcernedness as to my own heart, what indifferency in duties, or what neglects of them, or rather, which is worst of all, what aversion to them? Then was I ever confessing, and never thought I could confess or conceive enough of the baseness of my own heart. But now I am unconcerned under

under all; nothing of all this reaches my heart; this is my case in short, and a miserable case it is. What shall I say, or what shall I do? Is the fear of God before my eyes, or no? Am I not to this day *dead in trespasses and sins*? Is it not a plain case, that *sin has dominion over me*? Do not I see that I am *carried captive by Satan at his will*? The case is very dubious at best. And is it come to this? — Though my heart is as hard as a rock, I cannot but weep at this: Oh! Oh! this hard heart of mine; what shall I say of it? *Mystery, iniquity*. I must smite upon my breast, saying, *What have I done?* — *What have I done?* Why, I have grieved and quenched the Spirit, dealt basely with my God, and crucified Christ afresh, abused patience, and slighted love, long-suffering patience, and sweet love; this have I done. What could God have done more for me? What could I have done more against him? These returns —

92. May 15. At last I have taken in hand, the long deferred work, and, through mercy, some pleasant seasons I have enjoyed, which I ought to have taken notice of, as particularly last Friday was seven-night, I saw my peace procured and renewed with God, by that word, Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*. A sense of my sins made me for a long time afraid to believe it was so, till at last the word I mentioned came in a power that I could not resist, so that I was forced to hear what the Lord did say to me, and through rich grace he did speak peace. Oh! that I may never turn again to my folly! Remember, O my soul, how thou didst then

then look down with disdain upon this world, and all it could offer: Riches I was never uneasy after; as to pleasures, I could easily deny myself; but applause in the world, and the approbation of men of the best judgment, is what has suited my inclination most. But upon this too could I then look with indifference. I saw my God smile, and I could say, it is enough, May I but approve myself to him, and be accepted in the Beloved; and I have all!

93. *June 10.* Once more have I been negligent, but I design, without some extraordinary occasion, not to defer again. Since I wrote the last, I have been on several journeys, one of them to London. And I bless my God for keeping me in any measure, as I hope, amidst the deluding vanities of the place, and some temptations from my relations. My heart was fixed for Christ, esteeming it the most honourable employment I could be engaged in, if Christ would commission me to teach and preach the gospel; nor would I do this for filthy lucre's sake, nor yet to get the applause of the world, but for pure love to the cause of Christ, and an hearty desire for the good of immortal souls, who must either be eternally happy or miserable. But in order to this great work, and to act worthily from such principles, there are necessary a great many qualifications, without which I could not think of it, and which I must make my application to God for, namely, *a work of grace, wrought in my own heart*, for how can the natural man understand spiritual things? *he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned;—a knowledge of Jesus Christ,*
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and him crucified, for otherwise how can I preach Christ crucified, which is the office of a minister? *An acquaintance with the whole mystery of godliness; a judgment well informed in every doctrine of religion; an heart influenced by the power of godliness; and a life conformable to the gospel I profess.* These qualifications may I have, together with other useful knowledge I am labouring after by the blessing of God upon my studies, and then, *here am I, send me.*

94. September 16. Of late I have been in many different tempers of mind; sometimes without any sense of my condition, sometimes affected with it; sometimes warmed with desires, and sometimes without any concern. At length I hope God of his free grace has remembered me in my low estate, and, seeing me so lost on every side, and so insulted by the overgrown power of the enemy, has once more sent his good Spirit to work in me mightily, so that for these two last weeks I begin to feel a new spring of life within me, and a new principle influencing all my actions. I can be serious in duty, and sometimes heavenly in ordinary employment. Prayer is my duty and my pleasure, the word of God is an agreeable entertainment, and heavenly meditation is the sweetest refreshment I can meet with. This, though but little to what may be attained, yet, when I consider what I have been of late, is an happy change. Oh! grace, grace to the God of all grace, — that, when I was dreading vengeance and judgment for my great sins, he should thus surprise me with mercy, the richest mercy! Can thy grace do this? What can

can it not do? It can carry on the blessed work, till thou hast sanctified me throughout; it can pardon all my sins and justify my person; nay, notwithstanding all the bold sins of my whole life, notwithstanding the impurity and corruption of my nature, it can save me eternally at last. Here is a great salvation indeed! What wisdom must contrive it, and what a price must purchase it, and what must be the obligations of those who are made partakers of it? Jesus, how should I love thee? How should I serve thee? How should I devote all my time and powers unto thee? This should be the service of my life; and it is but my reasonable service while here; and this I hope shall be my employment to eternal ages, when time shall be no more.

95. *October 14.* Through the goodness of God, I have seen the end of another week. Alas! this course will not do! I believe there is a God, who knows all I do, who has a right to my best service, and expects that my first study should be to approve myself to him, who has a power to punish my neglect, nay, who is just and holy, and so must punish it according to his justice and holiness. This I believe, and yet I forget God. If he is not excluded from all my thoughts, he is in very few of them; and in none of them with that affection and attention he ought to be. Ah me! how imperfect is the work of sanctification in my soul? The most I can say of myself, is, that I wish I was holy, and that I desire to be spiritual. I am sure they who have any hopes from what they are or have done of their own, must be other sort of persons, and live a far other sort of life than

than I do, or else such a gross blindness, as is hardly possible to be conceived, must possess them. Were there not another and another sort of righteousness than my own for me to depend on, I would never impose on myself with vain hopes, but freely indulge despair. Not a thought more would I entertain of heaven or the favour of God. But, for ever be adored divine grace, this is not my condition. I have destroyed myself, but there is one in whom my help is found. Here is my hope, and here will I venture my soul.

96. February 17. 1717. Through infinite mercy, I find a difference between what I now am, and what I have been for a long time, yet not so great a difference as there is betwixt what I am now, and what I would be. Oh! for the good Spirit of God to work in me mightily; for, if I know any thing, I can say, this one thing I do know, *that of myself I can do nothing*; and yet I see that I have a great deal necessary to be done, a great deal of spiritual work, which requires more than natural powers to carry it on: my dark mind is to be enlightened, my dull and vitiated understanding is to be made acquainted with the great mysteries of godliness, such as the carnal man comprehends not, such as are spiritually discerned; my old notions of things are to be unsettled; what I have been used to prosecute with all possible diligence, as one of the chief things, I am now to discard, as unworthy the solicitous concerns of a soul? What I used to propose to myself as the greatest height ambition could aspire to, and by which I regulated all my lesser desires, I am now to let drop with

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shame and conviction of my unbounded folly. On the contrary, what I used to be easy and unconcerned about, now being awakened and made sensible of its importance, I am to pursue with my utmost vigour; and what used not to be in all my thoughts, is now to be the greatest business of my life, to direct all my actions, and influence all my designs. And this surely is not easily done. Yet this is not all which is to be done neither. There are not only new sentiments to be formed, and other principles to be established, but a life to be led, worthy such sentiments; and agreeable to such principles; and all this to be forced contrary to the course of nature, contrary to an old and stubborn habit, and contrary to all the opposition that hell can make against it; and this cannot be thought inconsiderable. Add to all this, that there are many temptations, that are on all sides presented from the world, for me to break through the established principles upon occasion, or rather wholly to give them up. I might go on without almost ever coming to an end; but when these and other things are thought of, the question hardly seems to be without reason, "Lord, who then can be saved?" And this must be answered, "Certainly none by his own power; none without the almighty power of God." So that the solution must be no other than this, *With God all things are possible.* O thou God of all grace, to thee do I apply myself, through the Mediator, for grace to help according as I need; I ask thy Spirit, and thou refusedst him not to those who ask him, to quicken me, to sanctify me, to take of Christ's fulness,

fulness, and give it to me, grace for grace, one supply of grace upon another, as my case requires; so that in me, even *in me also*, all grace may abound, *that, having a sufficiency to every good work, I may not be barren nor unfruitful in the work of the Lord.*

97. Feb. 24. This last week I have been endeavouring after more spirituality of mind, and holiness of life; and I did not attempt it in my own strength, but yet I found it hard work, hard work indeed. This Lord's day is our sacrament-day, and I have been doing something this last week in order to prepare myself for the ordinance, when, I bless God, I have had some helps from him in this work, as also some sealings in it. I will acknowledge it; though it is but a little, it is a great deal to what I deserve, to what I might expect, who have so abused the grace of God, and slighted his good Spirit. Vile wretch that I am, that ever I should do it! it cuts me to the heart to think of it. *Lord, lay not this sin, one of the greatest of my sins, of any sins, to my charge!*

98. March 10. Another week is gone! How swiftly time passes, how fast my days shorten! And yet how little more prepared am I for death! Blessed be God, I sometimes hope my state is safe, should death seize me, in that I hope I have believed; the Lord help my unbelief! But I am sure the present frame and temper of my mind is not a good one to die in, and yet I cannot get into a better. The work of mortification of sin is an hard work. This last week I have sometimes thought it has pleased the Lord to leave me more, as it were, a-

lone with my corruptions, to see what I could do with them, and how I could perform a duty, particularly the duty of prayer, when in such a condition. But what work have I at such times made of it? How have I endeavoured to raise my heart to God, but found it immoveable! How have I laboured and striven? And if after all I could find a little motion in my affections, so as to make one faint essay heavenwards, yet how have my affections presently sunk down again, if it were possible, below what they were before! Thus have I laboured sometimes, and all to no purpose, till at last I have been almost quite discouraged, knowing what an uncomfortable course this was; yet not so neither, but (when I proposed it to myself, as I did several times last week; were it to be always so, what would I do, would I always go on thus to labour in vain?) I was resolved in the strength of the Lord, to contrive striving against sin, and leave it to the Lord, whether he would let it all prove to be in vain. But yet this dulness did discourage me too, and not a little, in that it put me upon thinking, had not the Lord departed from me, and resolved his Spirit should no more strive with me; and whether my grieving this good Spirit, and slighting his sweet motions, had not provoked God to make me smart for the abuse of these, the greatest of mercies, by the want of them? These thoughts made me cry out, Lord, *take not thine Holy Spirit from me!* and yesterday in the afternoon particularly, when I was thus praying, I found much divine assistance in the duty, and some tokens of God's presence and acceptance of me and

and my offering. This morning too, after some restraints upon my soul, I found much enlargement in prayer for God's quickenings by his free Spirit; and could feelingly confess and lament my great sin and folly, my baseness and dissimulation, to slight and grieve this best friend of mine, the good and tender Spirit of God. I am sorry that I have offended him, that I should offer him the least affront; but to grieve him, to force him away by my madness and folly, methinks there is something more cutting in this thought, than all the rest. Oh! let not the wrath of this meek and tender Spirit burn against me! But, according to thine infinite tenderness and compassion, pity me, pity me, O thou almighty Friend! That I should abuse such goodness, and such a friend, ———— *so foolish, so senseless was I, that I was as a brute before thee.* Oh! how have I sinned and wronged my own soul! But I again beg, Lord, lay not this sin to my charge, but heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee!

99. March 24. This day calls me to more than ordinary seriousness, and *Ætas* leads my mind to a reflection on my *Aut. 19.* past life, and a consideration of the present frame and temper of my soul. This day makes me nineteen years old. The thought strikes a damp upon me. Nineteen years! so much time lost, or next to it! so long have I been pursuing vanities; so long have I in a great measure neglected my greatest interest, forgetting my soul, and forgetting God! How else is it, that ever since I have known any thing of the ways of God, which is as long as I can remember any thing, I have gone

gone on at such a miserable rate, as to attain no farther than I now have done? I have travelled in the way to heaven as the Israelites did in the wilderness, going backward and forward, on this side and that side, sometimes moving, and at other times standing still. So that, after all this time spent, my attainments are no greater than what I might have made, nay, than many others have made, in an inconsiderable part of the time. And after all, I now find myself behind, greatly behind what I was some years ago. And not only have I a farther way to go, but my strength to go on at all in this way is very much weakened. What miserable work have I made of it? The Lord help me! May the *miserableness* of it, O Lord, move thy *pity*, and not the *sin* of it stir up thine *anger*!

I am but young indeed, and so, comparatively, my days have been but few. But, when I consider the value of time, the fairness of my opportunities, the importance of my well or ill spending my time, and improving or neglecting my opportunities, (since on these eternal things depend), when I consider these things, I say, and what I might have been by this time, and yet what I now am, *my days have not been few*; they are not a few to be lost. But in whatever sense they are *few*, or not a *few*, in all respects they are *evil*. Jacob said his were so, and I am sure such are mine.

I have been endeavouring this last week and to-day, *to think on my ways*, and upon this *to turn my feet unto God's testimonies*; and, seeing the unhappiness of my present course, and the beauty of holiness, and seeing at the same time the uncertainty of my opportunities, and the
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certain difficulty of the work, I have been seriously purposing to make haste, and not delay to keep all God's commandments. This I desire to do; but to desire is the most I can do towards it. *The Lord work in me both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and perfect in me the work of faith with power!*

100. March 31. I can say that I desire to walk in newness of life, and somewhat more. At some times I feel some stirrings of new life, I hope in me; sometimes I can turn my thoughts on spiritual things, and I find my heart somewhat warmed with them. And I begin to think and act in another sort of a way; but, alas! my heart is thus affected only while this heat lasts, which is seldom long. Nor do I often find this heat neither: Oh! my weakness, my inconstancy! O that the God of all grace would establish, strengthen, settle me! I have last week been reading something of the reasonableness of being religious, which was very well proved, and I could not but be affected with it. The arguments were drawn mostly from the laws of nature, from the nature of man, and the nature of God. I found myself reasoned into a life of religion, and the pursuit of it. My judgment was convinced, and with some warmth I set about the work; but alas, I quickly found I had not powers equal to the work: I went on indeed till the first heat was over, and then I flagged, my resolutions grew cold, and my mind became indifferent to the things of religion. I then began to reason with myself about the necessity of religion, its necessity from duty, and its necessity

in order to my interest. Again, I considered that God's eye was always upon me, and so I *endeavoured to set the Lord always before me.* This gave a little motion to my affections, so as to draw out one desire, which almost languished in the bringing it forth, and the good motion died, and my mind was quickly overborne with vanity and carnality. I was conscious to myself of this, and sensible I ought to be more spiritual: then I again made another essay to reason myself into a serious and spiritual frame and temper of mind. I pleaded, though this mortification was an hard work, and contrary to nature, and it was very difficult to preserve a serious disposition at all times, yet that heaven would make amends, abundantly, infinitely for all pains: this I urged, but it did not move: I philosophized on the vanity of these objects of sense, and argued with myself that it was below me to be taken up with them. I then urged the greatness and worthiness of the employment to converse in heaven, and hold communion with God. I endeavoured to lay before myself the greatness of the work I had to do, the uncertainty of the time I had to do it in, the certainty of death, the awfulness of the day of judgment, the terrors, eternal terrors, and torments of hell, and the eternal joys and happiness of heaven; but all this would not move me, nor did it reach my heart, but only added guilt, and upbraided my stupidity. Thus it was with me, and thus it has often been, till at last, after I have tried all, and all to no purpose, and begin to be discouraged, the good Spirit, by a
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secret communication of himself to my soul, sets me at liberty at once, enlarges my soul, draws forth my affections, and makes me, *being thus enlarged, even run the ways of his commandments*, without the least reluctance, and with the utmost delight. How this is done, and done so suddenly, I do not know, nor am I desirous to know. This I know, through grace, that he does it, and this I desire I always may know.

101. *April 7.* What I wrote last about the insufficiency of reason, and all the resolutions I could form from reason, in order to carry on a spiritual life, I find every day more full experience of. By my reason indeed I can see something of the beauty of religion; I can see something of my obligation and my interest to be religious; but all that this serves for, as I said before, is to upbraid my weakness, and increase my guilt. I find the powers of my soul are not subject to my reason, nor indeed can they be, by all that I can possibly do; and how can they be so, considering the corruption and impotency of my nature; considering the strength of an habitual course of sin; considering the inconstancy and irresolution of my mind; considering the great power and inveterate malignity of Satan, who makes it his business to oppose all that is good; and considering the numerous temptations from the world, that are agreeably suited to my sensual mind, the vanity of which my blinded sense cannot see through, and to which, for want of a spiritualizing faith, I have nothing superior to oppose, so as to overpower the temptations, and secure my soul: consider-

ing this, I say, to be the state of my soul, how can it be that all these disorders should be subject to reason? No, my reason tells me it cannot be, and I am sure too my experience sufficiently convinces me it is not so; so that I may try, as I often have done, to reason myself into religion, but must try in vain, as I often have done too, unless some superior power concur in the operation: wherefore I now come to thee, O God, who art the only principle of spiritual life; as thou alone hast the words of eternal life, to change my heart, to spiritualize my mind, and to help me to walk in newness of life! Indeed I never pretended to effect this mighty change in me alone; but yet, of late especially, I have thought too highly of my own powers. Now therefore, O God, I declare from my whole soul, that I believe, *that without thee I can do nothing.* I despair of doing any thing in religion without thou workest in me and with me in all: I therefore humbly apply myself to thy grace, through the dear Mediator, for spiritual strength and assistance, in order to an holy life. I beg, above all things, thy Spirit to work all his works in me, to begin them all, to carry them all on, and to perfect them all. *May he sanctify my soul, may he give me a new heart, and put a right spirit within me!* Thou hast promised this, O God! Indeed thou hast said, *thou wilt be inquired of by those, who would have it, to do it for them.* I do then most humbly, and most sincerely inquire of thee to do this for me. Oh! for this good Spirit! I beg, my whole soul begs, and most importunately begs, as for my life, my eternal life. I beg

beg in Jesus' name, I beg with somewhat I hope of faith; Lord, give me thy good Spirit to do these things for me, and to finish in me the work of faith with power! I would not let thee go except thou thus bless me; deny me all things rather than this; nay, do this for me, and I will importunately ask for nothing else, let all things else go as thou pleasest. I beg that thou, O God, who hearest prayer for Jesus' sake, wouldst hear mine on his account!

102. June 9. I have been now endeavouring to pray, but such a piece of work have I made of it, that I am even discouraged! I have indeed attempted to address myself to God, but have hardly conceived two sentences, but my thoughts have turned quite to another thing, as if I had in an instant forgot what I had composedly and seriously set myself to do. I indeed quickly perceived how it was, and recovered my thoughts to the work, and begged pardon for the wanderings of my mind; but, before I had finished this one request in order to go on, my deceitful heart gave me the slip again, and, forgetting again the work I was engaged in, pursued some trifle. Thus I continued some time, all the while upon my knees, till at last I caught myself, and found my mind amused with twenty impertinences. It troubled me to find it so, and once more I directed my thoughts to the matter in hand, and humbled myself before God for the vanity of my mind; but I did not go on much longer than before, but my thoughts again wandered as before. In short, thus I continued wandering and recovering myself for about a quarter of an hour, for I was unwilling to get

up till I had prayed; and yet, with all that I could do, I could not keep my thoughts together to pray. At last I was forced to leave off with the duty undone; for I found my heart grew more and more unfit for it, the longer I staid; only, towards the last, I was enabled to put up some desires, that God would teach me to pray, and this I did somewhat feelingly. Oh! thou God of all grace, who knowest and seest the weakness of grace in me, the strength of indwelling sin, the powerful influence the enemy of souls has over me, *remember me in my low estate, for thy mercy endureth for ever!* I have no might against the great powers which come against me, but my eyes are unto thee, who *givest grace, who givest more grace!* Give me *grace, more grace, such grace as is sufficient for me!*

103. September 14. I am now to ask myself seriously, what I have been doing since the last review? and how the concerns of my soul are going on? And I find it is according to the old rate, nay, worse and worse; as dull, and lifeless, as indifferent, and thoughtless about the great concerns, as ever. No advancements at all. Sometimes indeed, yet that but seldom neither, I have felt some warm emotions in my soul, yet soon, very soon, have they languished away and died, so that my heart has soon grown cold as before, and has never been long the better for them. When was the state of religion, *the kingdom of God within me*, reduced lower in my soul than it is now? In short, when I consider the state of these things now, and compare it with what it was four, five, or six years ago, I cannot find my condition to be at all better

ter now than it was then; nay more, in many things I cannot but see it to be worse. Alas! unhappy man that I am, what shall I do? What have I lived all this while for? What have I enjoyed all these mercies and opportunities for? mercies and opportunities more than I had in former years, together with a better capacity of improving them all. What, I say, has *all this* been for? I have made it all stand for nothing; but God did not design it for nothing, nor is the account that he expects of all nothing. The Lord be merciful to me! I almost tremble to think of my condition. How shall I stand before God? Three years ago I remember how serious I was, and intent upon the business of religion, how I made conscience of every part of my duty, how faithful I was in the discharge of the most secret duties of religion, and how observant I was of the most spiritual part of it, and how zealous I was after frequent communion with God. I loved God, and felt the flame of love within me, and he was pleased to communicate of himself to me, and many times to make large discoveries of his love to my soul, which exceedingly refreshed it, and gave me joy unspeakable: but now (I could weep over my case in silence better than relate it, the comparison stings me!) duties are neglected, my heart is vain, my heart is hard, the exercises of religion have no relish; they are dull empty work; I can hardly take any pleasure in them. God is strange. Guilt dwells upon me, so that I rather turn myself from God than follow hard after him. When I give myself to serious reflections, the dismal

mal prospects I am presented with fright away my thoughts from them, and my mind is uneasy till they are diverted to some other things. Thus I forget God, because the remembrance of him is unpleasant; and so all that is good within me languishes, and my corruptions grow strong, so strong that the little attempts, that sometimes, after some quickenings and awakenings, I endeavour to make, prove as nothing, and, like Samson's cords, they immediately and easily yield to the stronger power of indwelling sin. And to such a condition am I reduced at last, that, though I see what a miserable course I go on in, and how necessary it is for me to be returning to the Lord, and to humble myself before him, yet I cannot stir; my heart is so hard that I cannot be affected with all these things; the powers of my soul are so weakened and irregular, that I cannot reform these things, and, for the most part, *my prayer is restrained before God.* This is my case: my hard heart cannot but weep to think of it: what shall I do? Oh! thou who art the Lord, the Lord God, *slow to anger, long-suffering, abundant in goodness,* full of pity and compassion, because thy mercy is infinite, I dare look up unto thee! I most humbly and heartily, with a deep sense of my sin, and as for my life and soul, beg and implore thy pity! Behold my miserable case, and cast a look of divine compassion upon me! *Out of the depths, out of the lowest depths, I cry unto thee; remember me in my low estate; see me pressed down under a load of guilt and sin; I labour and strive to recover myself, but in vain;*

vain; overborne with the weight of sin, I am forced to sink down again, and almost despair of relief, so that all I can do is to lie still, and only sigh and groan under the burthen, which I cannot free myself from. Fast bound, in vain I reach after liberty. Sure this can be nothing else *but the bond of iniquity!* Sure this is *the gall of bitterness!* Alas! my soul, what a condition hast thou fallen into! I have destroyed myself, but is there no help, Lord, in thee? Help, Lord, or I perish! Wilt thou but deliver my soul out of prison, and surely I shall praise thee, eternally praise thee!

104. October 27. Through the abundant goodness of God, I have an account more comfortable to give now than the last. God, who is full of compassion, and inclined to hear all who humbly call upon him in their distress, has taken pity on me in my low estate, and been pleased to give somewhat of a new turn to things. I have experienced somewhat of a *time of refreshment in my soul from the presence of the Lord*, and God seems to be *strengthening the things which remain, which were ready to die*. How shall I be sufficiently thankful for what God has done? *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!* Soon after I had writ the last, while as yet I was humbling myself before the Lord, for the state of things in my soul, I received a letter of melancholy contents. This laid me still more low before the Lord, and made me, through a sense of affliction, as well as other things, to seek God importunately. I laid my whole case before the Lord,

Lord, and often with some enlargements, and God was pleased to return in mercy to me, and to encourage my coming soul. I was heartily sorry for my backslidings and wanderings from God, and again brought myself to his foot, giving up myself to him and his service, begging earnestly, that, notwithstanding my unfaithfulness in his service, he would not cast me off, but give me grace for the future to be found faithful. Thus I hope God has been working in my soul, and done me some good by afflictions; but yet the good work does not go on so as I would have it; there is still abundance of vanity in my heart, the good inclinations of my soul are not very regular, and my corruptions are often very strong still. Oh! gracious God, who hast thyself, of thy mere goodness and pure compassion, begun a great deliverance for me, begun a good work in me, do thou thyself, of thine own mighty power and free grace, carry it on till thou hast at last perfected it, and thou alone shalt have all the glory!

105. November 24. I have endeavoured * to promise myself nothing, to expect nothing in this world but affliction, and to resolve in the strength of the Lord to make it the whole of my business to approve myself to God, in serving him faithfully, and doing all the good I can, in whatever state of life I shall be fixed; knowing, that, if it is the most afflicted state, it is of little consequence, since it will be but for

* It appears from his Diary, that he was under affliction when he wrote this section.

a moment, and it may work for me an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory. The lot of this life is not to be easy and happy. This is a state of trial, and a time for work only; but, though this is not the state of happiness, blessed be God, there is one to come, shortly to come, but never to know an end. Lord, direct me by thy providence which way I may live most for thy glory, and give me the testimony that I have pleased God, and let this be enough for me! But though I would now give up all the happiness of the world, and no more reckon upon any thing, but an afflicted state of life, while I am in it, yet I keep a prayer in reserve for much comfort and joy, even in this life too. The divine comforts and spiritual joys, I will never give up, and these are consolations and joys, which are not small; nay, it is in hopes of these that I am contented to give up that other more gross and sensual happiness. No; often do I hope, if God continues my life, to spend many a pleasant hour in the enjoyment of my God, and to be filled with such a joy as the world knows nothing of, *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, and always to be supported with his spiritual assistances.

106. February 22. 1718. It is now a long time since I wrote last, and I have been in many different tempers, so that in general I cannot tell which to say, whether it has been better or worse than usual. Sometimes I have been serious, but often vain; sometimes spiritual, but often carnal; but whether it has been better or worse with me than usual, this

I am sure of, that it has been worse with me than it ought to have been, and than it might have been. Oh! that I had but improved the many helps that I have all along enjoyed, the fair opportunities, the sweet assistances that the good Spirit of God has so often offered me, so as to have gone on in the ways of God, to have grown in grace! What then had I now been? How knowing had I been in spiritual things? How mortified to the world, and all that is vain here below? How conversant in heaven, and how happy in an acquaintance with God? Thus had it been with me, had I been so wise *as to work out my salvation, when God worked in me.* But how is it now with me? Alas, little or nothing of all this! Am I not still carnal? I am carnal, and walk as a carnal man. Are my corruptions subdued under me? No; the body of sin is still sure in its full strength. How vain is my mind still? How hard my heart? What slight impressions do things most serious make upon me? Poor thoughtless wretch! how am I sunk into sense? Lord, pity me! Awake, my stupid soul! Canst thou look up to God, canst thou consider heaven and things eternal, and be so cold and indifferent to them all? Will nothing affect thee? If it is possible for any thing to do it, here is enough to do it sure. But alas! in vain do I attempt to rouse my stupid soul by reason. Often have I urged all the reasons I could draw together, but my hard heart has been proof against them all. Sure it is not more hard to reason a dead body into life! Lord, what shall I do? Nothing is left for me,
but

And now that my Redeemer is ascended upon high to receive gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, send down of these gifts, and may I be a sharer of some of them ! That I am of the rebellious, does not exclude me, for, for such as these were they received. Thou givest grace, more grace, thou givest the Holy Spirit to them who ask him, These are the gifts my soul

longs for, and what I humbly, remembering my own unworthiness, and yet what I most importunately, remembering Christ's purchase, beg for. *Lord, send me not empty away!*

Ætas 107. June 8. A great deal of time is now past since I took the last review. *Aut. 20.* A great many remarkable incidents must have occurred in all this time, and very various must the temper of my mind necessarily have been: so many, and so various, that it is now an endless piece of work to go over them. I have negligently omitted my usual accounts, which I believe it had been better for me to have kept up. So that now I shall only consider how matters stand with me at present, and what my condition and circumstances now are in one respect or another. And if, in the first place, I take a view of the state and condition of my soul, as its superior worth makes its case the case of the greatest importance, the examination will not be impertinent, though it may not be comfortable. *Comfortable!* No, greatly otherwise. This is a case that will not bear a strict search and inquiry. As soon as ever I turn my eyes inwards, there opens to my sight a wild prospect of confusion, darkness, and disorder, with scarce any thing to be seen *pleasant to the eyes*, throughout all the space. All which speaks forcibly, *Turn away thine eyes.* But I will look again, and make closer search, and beg of God *to search me, and know my ways, to try me, and know my thoughts,* and examine my inmost soul; and let me not be ignorant of that above all things, which it infinitely concerns me to know. I may cry, *Peace,*
peace,

peace, to myself, when I have more occasion to be greatly distressed, and cry mightily unto God. I may have a notion that I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, whereas at the same time I might know that I was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. And was there but this knowledge in me, I might, by the help of divine grace, take such means, and make such applications, as, out of this low and deplorable estate, to become really rich, and increased with goods. It is sure then worth my while, it is my greatest duty, seriously to inquire how it is with me, and to answer impartially as before God!

But alas, it were easier to sit and sigh, and weep over my case, than to give a thorough account of it; it is so bad, and withal so confused and disorderly, that it would be both painful and difficult to describe. It is a work too, that I am so often engaged in, that I am almost discouraged to enter upon it. I have no heart or spirit for the work: wo is me! The Lord help me!

My heart was never right with God as it ought to be. I never was so strictly holy and fervent in spirit, as I ought to have been, and as I have observed many other Christians to be. But now it is worse with me than it has been in months past. I am now in my low estate. The Lord remember me! This has been my case a great while, and I have seen it so, but I cannot raise myself upward. Often have I, as I now do, looked up out of these depths, and wished and longed that God would take my feet out of the mire,

mire, and the clay, and set my feet on a rock, that I might walk in high places, and run the ways of God's commandments with enlargedness of heart. I cannot but so far dislike my manner of life and course, as to be uneasy at it, and yet I cannot be so thoroughly and constantly affected with it, as fixedly and heartily to return to the Lord. Often is my whole soul concerned and grieved to think how little I live to God, and how little I enjoy of God in the world, and what a low abject course I lead. Then I betake myself to prayer, and pray earnestly too with strong cries and tears, as I have lately done, that God would remember me in mercy, that he would consider my low condition, and send me help from himself. But alas! these good motions are but *as the morning-cloud, and, as the early dew, they pass away.* What is the bane of all my misery and ruin is my inconstancy, the inconstancy of my temper. Lord, lay not this sin to my charge; compassionate this my weakness, or I shall never do any thing to purpose in religion as long as I live! Lord, help me against this *sin that does so easily beset me.* O that I could keep myself from this as my own iniquity! I bewail my unhappiness and my sin, but I am afraid it will all prove but fruitless complaint, as it so often has done. Lord, hear me bemoaning myself! Hear my cry, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.* I should then be turned indeed, and till then I shall despair of it. Again, I beg, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God;* I would humbly endeavour to lay hold of thy covenant still, nor am I, I would hope, altogether with-
out

out some encouragement from the abundant grace of the covenant, and God's tenderness in his word, for there are *backsliding children* that belong to God, nay, *he is married to them*, and he, *who keeps covenant and mercy*, has not cast them off, but bids them return unto him; *Return, O backsliding children*, Jer. iii. 14.

Lord, dost thou bid me return after all my wanderings, and canst thou still receive me graciously, and, after all this, love me freely? My spirit is even overwhelmed with thy goodness. O the grace! the love! the tenderness! the more than *fatherly* pity, the more than a *mother's* compassions of the great God! Lord, wouldst thou have me return, and wilt thou receive me, and canst thou love me still? To return, is what I would do above all things. Lord, help me to return! Turn me, O God! *Return, O my soul, to thy rest, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!*

PART

PART II.

Containing the private Meditations
of the Reverend Mr _____.

1716. **N**O; it is not with me as it has been
in months past. Once it was easy
and familiar to me in a morning,
when I first waked, to have my
thoughts turned upon heavenly objects, and
my heart lifted up to God. I could rise, and go
to prayer with as willing an inclination as I could
go to my meals: I could pray with some life and
vigour, and be exceedingly pleased with the em-
ployment, for I enjoyed God in the duty. I could
seriously beg his blessing upon the work of the
day, before I set about it; and, in the midst of it,
could I send up my heart to God, and often feel
a ray of light and love darted into my mind,
which diffused quick pleasure and refreshment
through my whole soul, which at the same time ad-
ded fresh vigour to me, in the pursuance of the
great spiritual concern, and did not hinder at all
the common business of life that I was engaged
in. I could, after I had done my morning's
work, naturally, without any force upon myself
at all, address myself to prayer again. I could,
often in the day, improve a vacant quarter, or
an half-hour, in walking and meditating, and at
evening

evening especially, after the work of the day, either in the house or in the field, according as the season of the year was, many a pleasant half-hour or hour have I spent in heavenly contemplations, and sweet communion with God. I remember these things, I earnestly remember them still, and particularly those evening-walks, when I had no sooner got from home and from company, but I could get above the world, and all things it can give, and enjoy myself in converse with my God. When I saw him smile, with disdain could I turn, and give up all the honours and applauses of the world to them, who thought them so much worth their pursuit. When by faith I dwelt upon the exceeding great and precious promises, the riches of this world could no more tempt my soul. When I could through the skies see something of my mansion and my crown, there was not a monarch in the world, but I could look down upon, as below me in happiness; I could say, "Jesus, it is enough, and I desire no more." The soul is not more excellent than the body, than those pleasures I then felt, were beyond any thing that I ever felt of pleasure in the gratification of my carnal desires. Thus, when my heart has been warmed by meditation, have I often, in some silent and secret shades, applied myself to prayer, and then, *if ever I have known what it is to have fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ*, did I know what it was to have communion and converse with God. — Ah! I could dwell upon the subject!

This was when I was at another place. Little, very little, have I known of this life, since I came

came to ——— Oh ! my gradual declensions ! There's little of this spirit left. My course of life is now quite another. Ah me ! my hard heart cannot but weep to think of the comparison !

Now when I awake in the morning, there is some vanity or another possessing my mind. If I turn my thoughts to any thing more rational, it is about my studies, what I shall read upon one subject, and what upon another ; and, that I may do this, I set about it soon ; but first, rather to satisfy my conscience, than through any inclination, I find myself obliged to go to prayer. After some sort I go to it. I enter upon the duty with dull lifelessness, and endeavour to proceed : but before I have begun a few minutes, I find my thoughts carried away to twenty things almost. I call my thoughts again, and endeavour to recover them again ; which I have hardly done, and proceeded in the duty, but they are gone as far again. Oh ! miserable work ! Comfortless work !

Having thus, after some sort, spent some time upon my knees, for prayer I can hardly call it, I set about the business proposed, (having first in *haste* read over a chapter perhaps, which I used to be very *conscientious* about), and then I toil about the signification of a silly word, or the construction of an awkward sentence ; and then I read the profound and serious impertinencies of the learned *, with as

* Our author may perhaps here speak with an unguarded strength ; but his unwearied diligence (page 98.) in learning, shews that he did not debase it, only when it came in competition with better things.

much

much attention and application, as if on them depended my happiness for eternity, when those things on which it does really depend, I treat with as much unconcernedness and indifference, as these trifles can deserve. And so I spend my day; while indeed God is in but very few of my thoughts. At night, as the reflection upon a day so spent would not be very pleasant, so I do not care to turn my mind to reflect upon it. For custom sake I keep up the form of going to prayer at night, just in the same manner as in the morning; and at public attendances for prayer I am worse, if possible, than at private duties. My Sabbaths too, are like the rest of my time. These things I cannot but be sensible of at some times, and I feel my heart somewhat affected; but the sense and impression wear off. There has of late befallen me a surprising providence of the greatest importance of any I ever met with. It has pleased the Lord to remove my dear Father by death. I cannot but take this to be a loud call to me, to be thinking on my ways; and I hope, by the grace of God working upon me, it may give another turn to my life. I have often since seriously thought on my ways, and endeavoured in God's strength, *to turn my feet unto his testimonies*, and without delay, to endeavour a religious observance of all God's commandments. I did, when my affections and passions were warm and wrought up, immediately upon the death of my dear father retire for prayer, and then did I give up myself wholly to the Lord, and to his work, resolving to make religion the business of my

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life,

life, and from that day, to take God for my God, and the guide of my youth. In a more affecting manner, after this, I did more than once, standing over the dear corpse by myself, solemnly give up myself to God and his service. I did it in the name and fear of God, I hope, and my whole soul was engaged in the work. And again would I do it. Now, Lord, pardon the sins of my life, heal thou my backslidings, through the plenteous redemption wrought by Christ; give thy Spirit to work in me mightily, and thy grace always to assist me, and always to be sufficient for me. I then here I am, I, accept me, and the surrender of myself, my all, I devote myself to thy service; all that I would be concerned about any more is, to shew myself approved unto God.

October 18. 1718. *I will sing of mercy and judgment*, says David, Psal. c. 17. When I review God's dealings with me the last week, I have mercy and judgment to speak of. It has been a week of as remarkable experience as most of my weeks have been. Yesterday was seven night I took my leave of ———, and this week I design for London; so that the last week, for the most part, I spent in serious reflections upon the past part of my life, particularly that part of it that passed at ———, and, together with these reflections, I have been thoughtful of my journey to London, and other great things that lay before me. The things I have been thinking upon, could not but give my thoughts a serious turn; but what has set the matter home, and made me more affected with these things, has been the afflicting providence

decease that has attended the family this last week, namely, the dangerous illness, and yesterday the death of one of my younger sisters, about thirteen years old; one, as thoroughly prepared for death, I believe, as any of us all; one, that (since God saw it necessary to call one of us away for a warning to the rest, that we might be ready) was the fittest to go, the most ready for the Son of man's coming.

There was not only hope given us in her death, but great satisfaction as to her state from her life long before. Young as she was, yet, for some years, I am persuaded, she was prepared, whenever her change should come. They are not the overflowings of love, and the respect of a brother upon such an occasion, that stretch my charity to think so. Were she no relation, and had I known her, I should think so: were she my enemy, and I knew so much of her, I durst not but say so: such were the extraordinary and evident marks of religion upon her, that I should cease to be charitable, did I doubt her piety, and should be alone in my doubts. She was one so acquainted with God, so knowing in spiritual things and experimental religion, and all this when she was so young, that I do not remember I ever knew another her equal. And she eminently felt the comfort of this her early religion in her dying hours. She had indeed strong consolations, and a good hope through grace, nay, a full assurance of hope at her end; for she saw clearly where to found her hope, and felt that the foundation was strong enough to support, the sure and well-ordered covenant of grace that God had made with her soul,

soul, and the immutable promises which God had given her, that she might have *strong consolation, having fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before her.* Dear soul! I weep not for her! if I loved her, I should rejoice that she is gone to her Father, I meant, her heavenly Father, her God, for there is the happiness of her condition. But she is gone to her *earthly father* too; the first that is gone after him. There could my imaginations follow her to the world of light and glory, and *see through a glass darkly* such a glorious scene, as would be worth dying to be present with. But whither have my thoughts wandered? My flowing affections have carried me beside the argument I proposed to go upon: I designed to review the experience of the last week, and, mentioning her, I entered into her character and condition; this there is no occasion for, I know it myself, and for others I do not write.

The greatest part of the last week, I said, I spent in serious reflections upon the past part of my life, especially since I went to —, and a more melancholy subject I needed not to think upon. A very uncomfortable scene must present itself before me; such an one that has indeed brought me very low, and greatly humbled me before the Lord in my retired hours for prayer, and my solitary walks for meditation and reflection. I have poured forth my heart in long complaints to consider what I have been doing, and how I have lived for between the three and four years past. The view of the state of things in my soul now, and what it was about four years since, was enough to humble

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my soul, and work in me a *broken and contrite* spirit, if any thing in the world would. The baseness and deceitfulness, the desperate wickedness and treachery of my heart in departing from God, have appeared to me in such vile and black colours, that I could not but *repent and abhor myself as in dust and ashes* for them. In this sense of my sin and guilt before God have I continued for some days, loathing myself for my vile abuses of God's grace, and admiring and adoring the long-suffering of his patience; *my repentings were kindled together*; and my very soul has been melted down before the Lord. And yet, through the infinite condescension of divine grace, when I have been in the very depths of my complaint, I have not been without some mixture of hope. When I have been in the depths, and thence have cried unto the Lord, *I have seen the forgiveness with God, and the plenteous redemption*, Psal. cxxx. And when I have seen *the forgiveness of God, and this plenteous redemption*, and have been enabled humbly to hope that, after all my sin, after all the baseness and perfidiousness of my ways and doings in God's sight, yet that there was forgiveness enough for my case too, and that the redemption was so plenteous as to be able to *redeem me from all mine iniquities*; I say, when I have seen this, my heart would no longer hold, my eyes flowed in tears, my affections and passions broke in upon me like a flood, and my soul was even overcome with a sense of the love and grace of God. "What," said I, "and may all my sins that have been so many be forgiven me? And will God be reconciled to me still?" "Oh!

" Oh ! the love, the grace ! " I could not but
 cry out, and repeat it often in a flood of tears
 and passion ; " It overpowers me, it overpowers
 " me, and I cannot support under the sense of
 " it. I will admire it continually. I will dwell
 " upon it in my meditations ; I will speak of it
 " to men, and I will adore it to eternity. Can
 " so many sins, can so much be forgiven me ?
 " Well then," said I, " and *I will love much too.*"
 Blessed be God, I have more than once been
 thus affected in prayer, and I have been enabled
 to carry about with me such a sense of divine
 grace, as I have now described, for some days
 past. How can I love thee enough, dear Jesus
 my Saviour ! how would I love ? Thou hast
 purchased this grace, thou art the Author of
 the covenant which is so *well-ordered in all things,*
and sure : well-ordered indeed, may my soul say,
 because it abounds with so much grace, else
 there were no comfort for me from it. And
sure it must be also ; because it is founded up-
 on thy blood. O the riches ! the glory of
 this covenant of grace ! Nothing so worthy of
 God, nothing so welcome to man. For what
 could speak peace and comfort to my soul, un-
 der a sense of my vile miscarriages, under the
 discouraging reflections I must make upon my
 past life, under the melancholy prospect I have of
 the state of things within ? What could give ease
 to my troubled mind under guilt, and the appre-
 hensions of the divine anger, but this ? Nothing
 around the world ; nothing all nature through,
 but this ; *the covenant of grace.* And this does
 it effectually indeed. So that this same vile
 wretch, who is conscious of all this sin, who
 knows

knows what he has done to provoke the Almighty, yet has humble hope that he is not appointed unto wrath, has peace and comfort, nay, has confidence towards God through the Lord Jesus Christ : through the covenant of grace by him, this same bold offender can think of God, and not be troubled. *But can I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of salvation?* This confidence have I in him? this hope in the covenant of grace? and can I forget the folly of my ways, and the sins of my courses, though I see and adore the grace, through which there is hope? *I have done all this wickedness.* Alas! what have I done? what have I been doing for some years past?—My dear sister was early prepared for death, and soon made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light : but what am I? She had not by many years reached the time that I have had, and yet how much more ready for her change? This it is that grieves me, this stings me, to think that once, when I was about the age of my sister, my soul prospered too : I had then a knowledge of divine things not contemptible ; the things of the other world took up many of my thoughts ; I was diligent to make my peace with God, and to keep it undisturbed ; I did so favour of the things of God, and had such a sense of the heavenly enjoyments, that then, I am persuaded, I could have died comfortably too. But now — what I should do now, under the approaches of death, I cannot tell. I very much doubt how I should behave myself. What displeasing reflections should I now have upon my backsliding heart, and wandering courses? What fears and jealousies

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might I have upon the account of my falseness and treachery in God's covenant, and the separation and long strangeness between God and my soul, through the course of my sins, and the almost perpetual backslidings with which I have backslidden from God for a long time till now? What trouble and distress of spirit these things must give me, should I see death before me, God only knows: I am afraid not a little. In short, I very much fear that I could not now die in peace.

Oh! my soul, are these the improvements, the advancements thou hast made since that happy time? Is it thus that thou hast grown in grace? Alas! my case! to have lived these seven years last past (the best part of my time) only to lose my peace with God; to become unprepared for death, and afraid of it! Whereas once I was willing, and desirous rather to be dissolved, *and to be with Christ*, as thinking it *far better*. Is not this a cutting reflection? *Oh! that it were with me as in months past!* ——— But it is not so; ——— I am fallen, I am fallen; ——— O my soul, how art thou fallen! I see something from whence I am fallen, and do indeed repent. *I repent, and abhor myself in dust and ashes*, for what I have done. But again I fly to the riches of divine grace, and return to the covenant, that better, that glorious testament, of which Christ is the Mediator. And this I plead for forgiveness still. Through the forgiveness that is with thee, O Lord, and through the plentiful redemption in this covenant, pardon and forgive my so great sins, and turn away thine anger; turn, and smile again upon me once more.

more. Turn again, and *cause thy face to shine* upon my soul, and then shall I have peace, and my soul will return to her rest again!

I have great reason at this time to be earnest and importunate with God, that *he would strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die*, upon many accounts: not to mention now that great consideration, the awful work that lies before me, I have in design this week a great journey to take: I know by too sensible experience, that travelling seasons, new objects, and strange faces, are very apt to divert the mind from that serious concern, from that strict guard, and that diligence with which the heart is to be kept, and the place where I am going has peculiar temptations this way. The Lord keep me! God knows it is not in me to direct my steps: *he that trusts his own heart, it is said, is a fool*. I am sure should I, who have had such large experience of the deceitfulness of my heart, trust my own heart still, I should be a fool indeed. What I should do, is to *watch and pray that I enter not into temptation*; and after all, in which alone is my safety, I commit myself to him, *who is able to keep me from falling, and to present me faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*. To him, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

September 3. 1719. After all the feeble and ineffectual relief and props put under my frail tabernacle, which for a while flatter with hopes of restoration and strength renewed, it will not do; the supports are ill placed; it will fall beside them; the earthly house is so

thoroughly decayed, and inwardly unsound, it will fall through all those props, and reach the dust.

I walk about the house for a quarter of an hour, brisk and gay, strong and vigorous, eager upon enterprises, lay schemes of action for long life and futurity, travel the world over, and really design what my fancy contrives. Thus urged on in thinking, with pace quickened and violent I hold out till the next quarter of an hour puts me in mind that my strength fails: I throw myself down hardly able to stir, my spirits sink on a sudden, and just in the same manner my enterprises fall. How inconstantly am I well? How easily my countenance changed?

A very breath of wind offends me; crushed before the moth; how frail I am! Can I but know it, why then is my mind so vain? No, Lord, no schemes would I lay but of preparation for death, of doing some good in a little time, and under a weak capacity. Of thy coming, and being ready for it, let me be always thinking. And must this be a melancholy exercise, and gloomy imaginations? I know where is the fault, if it is so.

To be with Christ — Let that be the prospect upon which my thoughts dwell. Is not here scope for my imagination in its quickest motions, and widest wanderings, a pleasant subject and full of delight? Here let my working mind lay schemes of rising honours, pleasures abounding through eternal futurity; here let my desires work, fancy please itself, and reason approve.

I will think of a crown that I shall have, and wear

wear in heaven; of casting this my crown at the feet of Jesus whenever I meet him: I will think, and give reins to my utmost ambition, of being a king, an heavenly king and priest to God and the Father. I will think of the fair mitre upon my head, of the purity and beauty of my raiment, of being clothed in white, of the palm I shall bear in my hand. How shall I go in procession with others my heavenly brethren and friends, through the heavenly streets? This my particular friend; and the other my dear relation. How shall we walk the glorious mount, *and sing in the height of Zion!* Having got to the highest top there, we will stand and sing one of the songs of Zion, one of the new songs of the country which we shall have learned? Oh! how shall we sing? wondrous sense, charming tune, our very souls shall sing!

Here, my soul, is life and spirit in the exercise. Is there any thing melancholy in such a scene as this? heaven! the throne of God! God most high my friend! rivers of pleasure! fulness of joy! my exalted Redeemer! friendly angels! harmonious society! myself a citizen! and *eternally* to be so. Is the prospect barren, contracted, or unentertaining?

Well, it is enough; all my earthly schemes of life and action are broken; let my fancy be vain upon them no more. My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. Let the other world be now my all, and my heart be all in it. My present joys, and pleasing hopes, let them spring from thence!

Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest
this

this moment my soul does not desire life; this night I could give up my all, and lay down my head, and die. But one wish will not, cannot leave me; one thing I must desire of the Lord, and seek after, before I am willing to die.

Oh! that my soul were more prepared for the change! My unholy heart. — My strong corruptions! — how can I be ready? Do but once purge me from these, and I ask no more; those particular corruptions, the subject of all my complaints, and all my prayers. Thou, Lord, knowest my soul, *and my desire is before thee, and my groanings are not hid from thee.* But purge me from these, and make me ready, then *come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!* I am weary of this world, more weary of myself; the sooner the better. *Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!*

November 12. 1719. * Before I send out my accounts by letters to one friend and another, let my own soul have one word of serious soliloquy with itself; for it is of the greatest consequence that there be a true understanding of myself; and a word let me have with my God, for he is infinitely the best of my friends.

My God, I said, because the sound was dear; but I wish I could say it with less hesitation; I wish my manner of life, familiarity of communion with him, and heavenly enjoyments in this journey, had strengthened my boldness at the throne of grace. But, alas! I find myself since returned in far other temper: little or nothing have I to relate of spiritual enjoyments for a long time, for the whole of my journey, almost

* After a journey to London.

a month. Oh! company, wide acquaintance, and vanity of objects, how fatal to the religion of my mind! My complaint must be something of this sort, *I went out full, but came home empty*. Such a night had I of God's dealings with my heart, and my heart taking hold of him, and wrestling with him, as I do not remember before, as far as I can look back! This was the night before I set out on my journey; but the journey hurrying me away left me not time to set it down, though the setting it down, and the improvement of the frame I was then in, might have been greatly of more service to me than any thing in my journey. I could say, *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth*; I prevented the night-watches with my tears, and could have continued all night in prayer, though I had lost sleep for nights before. It was a rare experience, and I am persuaded, if ever the Spirit wrought with me, it was then. One text of scripture was set home warm upon my heart; and if I did not see new things in it, I felt strange things from it, such as I never felt before. The words, the subject of my meditation and prayer, were, *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee to sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*. Oh! how did I conceive the tenderness and grace of the Redeemer, calling to me with accents so full of pity and love as once he did to him; "Simon, " Simon! thou little knowest what designs Satan " has laid, and is still laying against thee; thou " art ignorant of half his devices, how diligent he is in the work, how desirous of having thee, nay, how near he has been to pre-
" vailing

to vailing over thee, and how he hopes he is secure of thee in the end." Then came all the great temptations of my life to my remembrance, and my eyes were, in a manner, enlightened to see, particularly as to some of them, the footsteps of the enemy, and the devices he had practised. Then did I see how nigh my foot was to slipping; and how thankful was all my soul, that after all I could say, Satan has me not yet! How *were my repentings kindled together?* And my love to the Redeemer wrought as strong. The words, *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not*, quite overcame my affections, and, in the midst of this low view of myself, my faith rose high in the securing prayer and intercession of a blessed Redeemer, that, in spite of all oppositions, his prayers would be heard, and my faith should not fail.

This the morning before I went my journey: but now it is far otherwise with me. Oh! that I could lose such a frame so soon! my deceitful heart!

One thing however I will bless God for, as I have reason, that Providence has not cast my lot of life in that tumultuous city and ensnaring place. God knew what was in my heart, and how mercifully did he fix me in a place of solitude, and freedom from temptations! But my charges I bring not against the place, but against my own heart; I did not walk with God there, I almost lived without the Father, the Redeemer, and the Spirit, all the time. Sorrowful confessions! I prayed to God as usual, but how? As one who had withdrawn himself, and was gone; and yet great things lay before me,
and

and the fatigue of the journey brought on me weakness and disorders, which should have turned my thoughts to God, and another world.

Lord, what shall I say to thee, for my soul would return? I dare hardly present myself before thee, under the thought how I must appear; how ungrateful, how unfaithful! how have I neglected thee, slighted thee, and abused thee? I am covered with guilt, shame and confusion of face; and sure I am, were the manner of God the manner of men, there were no room for return. I know my old, and my only refuge in such overwhelming times, *the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanses from all sin, the plenteous redemption, the multiplying of pardons, and the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* But this thought at times recoils upon me with dread, when I have been so very ungrateful and treacherous; *Do not I turn the grace of God into wantonness? Do not I make an ill use of abounding grace, and heal my hurt too slightly? What shall I do? God must speak peace,* and his word will convey it. Blessed be God, who is never weary in his grace! Part of this afternoon I spent in a solitary walk. It has been a pleasant and restoring season.

January 1. 1719-20. According as my strength will bear, let me this evening make some inquiry how it is with me. I wish I were forward to this work of writing in times of affliction especially it would be of mighty service to me afterwards to review the accounts. This I must say, to the praise of God's grace alone, that, in times of sickness and the prospect of death, I have always I think found God near unto me, and good

to my soul, though at other times my heart wanders, and I live too much without him in the world. What grace and condescension is it, that the infinite Being, neglected and forgotten in health, but sought to in affliction, should so readily return? Thus it was with me this last illness. In a long journey my heart gradually departed from God, according to its faithless manner. I came home ill: my sickness increased upon me, till death was set near before me. But then how seasonably did the God of all grace come in? "Peace," said he, at his very entrance; "*Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.*" Nay, further *he manifested himself to me*, so that I was able to tell a good friend in a letter, "All is well; old times are brought over again, such days as I never expected to see again, in this world; God makes himself near to me, communes at times, and I hold communion with him, and I think we are now as conversant as ever; help me to praise him." I wish I had writ more largely at that time for my own ease; for alas! now, when I was repeating the words, how did my conscience upbraid me for the different frame I was in, though I am still under great weakness. This happy frame lasted while I was under the full apprehensions of death in the end of my illness, and I was then perfectly as a weaned child: I had no taste or relish for any thing of this world, nor a wish that was earthly. The certain symptoms of death I carried in myself were a great spring of comfort, and the pleasure of my life.

I thought to contract my compass of pleasure, and confine it, if I durst say so, contract and
confine

confine it to God. But it is enlarging it, refining it, raising it. What, is an infinite object contracted? Let me but have the passage-communication free and clear, thought I, and I am sure there is enough, infinitely enough to flow. Thus I thought with myself, and according to this in some measure I lived a little while; but then I grew better in body, and people doubted not of my recovery.

By degrees, after insensible beginnings my zeal and my religion abated, and God was less in my thoughts, and, as I found, farther from me. And this is the condition I am now in. The Lord pity me! How should I now rise higher than ever I did in my old complaint, *the treachery of my heart!* Is it possible the heart of man should be so inconstant and unfaithful, and in such a small distance of time in such different tempers? Sure I can appeal; "*Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest the sincerity of my heart, when I was then in my best temper; thou knowest my soul did follow after thee.*" Can I then be so changed on a sudden?

I must say, to the praise and glory of God, for I am sure it is the Lord's doings, and entirely the immediate workings of his Spirit, that at times, though I know them too seldom, I find myself more than ordinarily moved; an opening prospect (*of heaven*) is presented before me, the world and all things in it vanish and shrink to nothing. God and religion are all. — On a sudden my spirit is made fervent; and I am violent for the kingdom, and entirely taken up in the pursuit of it. Then how I love my God!

In short, I have been enlarged to such a degree,

as that I have been almost ready not to desire
 “a better temper than this.” All my soul goes
 out in this wish, “Oh, that there were always
 “such an heart in me.” But this damps me in
 the midst of all, the expectation, the certainty,
 that in a little time all this will be over, and I
 shall be just the same man as before; and, wo
 is me! in a day or two’s time, or less, the event
 proves accordingly. Oh! my heart! O, that
 my head were waters, and my eyes fountains of
 tears to bewail my case! Yet something I learn
 from hence. What makes me at times differ so
 much? The Spirit’s acting and working power-
 fully, or forbearing. This then shews me where
 my help lies. How then should I pray to the
 God of all grace, to the Spirit of grace, that
 these workings may be continued and constant!
 But I grieve the Spirit, and quench the Spirit.
 O hinder that, O Lord; let me not quench him
 in his motions, suffer me not to grieve him!

“Thou God of all grace, who givest grace,
 “and givest more grace, and hast said, My grace
 “is sufficient for thee, thou knowest and seest
 “that the grace I have attained to is not suffi-
 “cient. More grace is necessary to the keeping
 “of me faithful, for I am ever wandering.
 “Consider my case, and let more grace be gi-
 “ven out, that it may be sufficient for me!”

PART

PART III.

Containing the Letters of the Reverend Mr ———.

To Mr ———.

June 22. 1719.

Dear ———

I Set myself down to write now to my friend, because I have got a subject that pleases me, and with pleasure I can be talkative about it.

My subject is the weakness and decays I feel coming upon me, not just now only, through the power of imagination and fancy indulged, (for I would not have you balk what I would seriously say with such a conceit; I can judge of imagination and the manner of its working, and can assure you that this is not its hour), but for some time I have found old disorders returning, and now I feel myself pretty much under them.

———— A slow fever has hung upon me almost constantly for these several days, which certainly must wear and spend very much. ———

I have a frequent cough too, which almost spends me as much. ——— In short, the case I believe is this, and others think so too, I am far

far gone in a consumption. But my friend is more of a Christian than to think any thing of all this dismal: No, I smile when I say it, the subject is pleasant, and it cheers me to think of it.

This is the light in which I look at it; — *There is the earthly house of this tabernacle*, in which the heavenly soul is held a prisoner; in which the Christian *groans, groans earnestly, and is burthened*. He sees this earthly tabernacle, wearing, wasting, reeling, tottering, in short, ready to be dissolved. — Well, is there any thing dismal in all this? Far otherwise; for, when this heavy burthensome tabernacle shall be dissolved, *he has a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

Alas! my friend, what is there in this world worth living for? How low the attainments? How imperfect the enjoyments? Mingled joys, pleasures allayed, but sorrow prevailing in all the composition. This is the case here. But there is a place *where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore*.

Good is the object of the soul's pursuit, but where is the *transcendent excellent good? the pleasant good? or the profitable good?* The *pleasant good* that is to satisfy largely all the big expectations and importunate desires of the soul, is not to be found in all this land. Vanity, disappointment, and vexation of spirit! *Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!* A younger man than Solomon, of less experience, and less knowing than he, can see it. But the *profitable good*; if this only was to be found, it would be something worth while to live for it. But where have I a prospect

prospect of this either? *The glory of God — good to mankind — or improvement for myself.* As for *God's glory, or others good,* how little must either lose, by such a life as mine lost? The desires of my soul, I hope, are sincere, and earnest for the one, and the other: preaching too is an honourable work, and the most probable way of doing this good: but you and I cannot but see it with sorrow, how little is done in our day by preaching; from my own however, I am sure, small things are to be expected. *The report goes forth, and in some manner or another it is received, but to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us of some such things in their days, but we ourselves are almost strangers to them.* And then, *to labour in vain, to spend our strength for nought,* is nothing worthy the desire of living. Some indeed, the Lord pity them and open their eyes, labour not in vain, because they propose another end, which they compass by their labour; but men of another spirit are forced to complain. But still it would indeed be profitable to live, *if my own soul also could improve by living,* if it grew in grace, and prospered in religion; but what if it rather languishes, pines away, and goes backward? *To grow more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, more attempered to the enjoyments, to the manner of life, to the company, the employments and exercises of the heavenly world, this would be truly desirable, this would indeed be a profitable good.* But, if to live longer here, is to grow more unprepared for all these; if I remember the time many years past, when I

was

was much more meet for the inheritance of the saints, the enjoyments and the employments of heaven than now, (and God and my own soul know this is the case), then where is the good of life? If it has been thus with me, and this is to be my manner to grow unprepared, as God only knows whether it may not, and my deceitful heart makes me suspect it, then is it not better for me to die than to live?

You may say to yourself, "The thing is awful, dying is a great work; happy is he who is ready for it!" I think so too; and were it not for one strong hold, to which I fly, and where I rest, the thought of it would make me even amazed and tremble. — My guilty soul prepared to meet its God! — But let me tell you, my friend, where is all my salvation? the refuge, the anchor, the foundation of all my hope? It is the everlasting covenant, the atoning sacrifice, the blood of this covenant, Jesus the Saviour to the uttermost, a living Intercessor and Advocate with the Father. On this bottom it is that my soul stands; I hope it is a sure foundation; *it is the tried corner-stone, chosen of God, and precious.* Whatever different sets of principles others may form to themselves, and fetch comfort from, I declare this is all my salvation, *the everlasting covenant of free grace: a sure covenant, a well-ordered covenant indeed!*

Is it not *well ordered*, my friend, when such a wretch as I, conscious to myself of so much sin, both before I knew any thing of God, and especially since, conscious of perpetual backslidings, breaking covenant, grieving the Spirit, quenching

quenching his motions, when such a wretch as I, who do this moment, God knows my heart, weighing every thing, look upon myself as the chief of sinners, yet can still retain hope thro' grace? Is it not, I say, *a well-ordered covenant? The blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses from all sin*; never, I think, have I seen more of the efficacy of it and its value than of late. The atonement is so effectual, that there remains no more conscience of sin. In innocence there is no conscience of sin; but they must be more righteous than I, who can feel any comfort from thence; and, after this cleansing too, there is no conscience of sin, and hence the boldness in the day of the Lord. *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.* This is excellent doctrine, comfortable doctrine, honourable to God, and acceptable to men. Preach it, my friend, earnestly: when I am dead, preach it: while I have life and strength, I will speak of it, *for it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, and besides, it is all my salvation too.*

But whither do I wander? My paper bounds me. The subject however is not unacceptable; to my friend it is not. What my free soul has uttered to my friend, I know will not be misinterpreted. It is not dictating, it is not assuming; it is a friend's freely saying all to his friend. You understand such converse; shew you do by your answer. Remember me; when you pray, remember me be sure; write to me; come and see me when you can. Think not of the melancholy entertainment of seeing a sick man, a sick friend. I am very well as I would be. If I am weak, I am pleased to be so, and I have been telling you how

how I dare to be so; expect then to find me pleasant and chearful; however you will find me

Your Friend, &c.

In a postscript to this letter to another friend, among other things, Mr ——— thus writes.

It is better with me than ever since you knew me: be pleased and thankful to God when you hear it. I enjoy the most pleasant and comfortable manner of living I have ever known. To prove it to you at once, and say all in a word, I hope, I can say, my soul prospers. Happy obscurity! blessed solitude, leisure, and retirement! you I pity, and wish they were yours. How great the tenderness and pity of the heavenly Father! How gentle my afflictions! How easy to be borne! How light of evil, but weighty of comfort! because the forerunners of weighty glory, *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

As for my friend, instead of saying how much I think of you, I will only tell you this; I do not believe I have once prayed in private since I saw you, but I have remembered you; and sometimes earnestly remembered you; the same I expect from you.

As for advice or persuasion, my friend thinks it not assuming to talk so, this little corner of my paper will not hold it, it would be too large for a postscript. I shall only then put you in mind of what I mentioned formerly, and importunately pleaded with you about. More serious prayer, spiritual meditation,

tation, constant watchfulness, examination, reflection, the word to dwell richly in you, &c. — Religion in the heart, my friend, is all: to favour constantly the things which be of God. Grace be with you! Peace be with you! Everlasting blessings be yours! All that is called good, *that eye hath seen, ear heard, or heart conceived*, be yours — eminently yours.

July, 1719.

To Mr —

AH, my friend, very low; pity me, pity me, O my friend. Is this to grow well again? I profess I am almost sick with the fear of being well. I dread to back go to life again. A thousand fears discourage me, and at present almost overwhelm me.

In the first place, my deceitful and desperately-wicked heart creates in me innumerable jealousies over it. No, let me not go back to health again! My heart cannot bear health and prosperity. No, all is well now; thro' infinite grace *God has spoken peace to me*, and it is enough; of all things, *let me not turn again to folly!* But I am sure I shall if I grow well again. Oh! health and many days in such a world as this, what an uncomfortable prospect!

How good has this sickness been? What had I ever more occasion to bless God for? for how many years have I been repeating my complaints of my own backslidings, and of God's departing? And all in vain; still backsliding farther and farther. This has been my manner to sigh,

and go backward. How oft have I weakly endeavoured to return? But in vain; till, despairing of my own strength and power, I have importunately applied myself to God, "*Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; turn me again, O God, and once more cause thy face to shine on me, and I shall be saved.*" Thus I prayed and preached on the subject, because it affected me; but all this in vain till this last sickness, a blessed time! (do not wonder I am fond of it, and uneasy at a change.) In this time many mysterious ways of grace has God taken with me, which God and my own heart only know of. *I was afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, till God did turn again, and caused his face to shine, and made my soul return to its rest too.* Well now, after all this, can I bear to part with this sickness? How is it endeared to me? Or rather, it is the frame and temper of mind that I would not part with, which I am afraid I shall part with if I return to health, by returning at the same time to folly. And must I act the old life over again? It would grieve me to do so; *thus the latter end would be worse than the beginning.* But this I am earnest with you about; if I should (as I would still say, let the Lord do with me as seems him good) recover health, and grow vain, and lose that favour of religion I have now something of, I beseech you, I conjure you by all the bonds of our friendship, as you have any love for my soul, and by the fear you have of God before your eyes, that you would faithfully warn me of it. But, no; let me not have the trial of it, I dread the event. I desired that God would spare me, that I might recover strength, before

before I went hence, and should be seen no more,
 SPIRITUAL strength; and I bless God he
 has done it in some measure in this sickness, and
 may he go on to do it much further! Let it be in
 sickness! This is as suitable a time as any; it has
 been so. This then is enough; health and va-
 nity let me know no more!

But when I said at the beginning of my letter,
in the first place, I intended to mention another
 thing soon after, the fears of which, next to my
 deceitful heart, discourage me, and overwhelm
 me sometimes more than any thing in the world.
 It is a minister's work, which, if I recover, I
 must return to, and yet feel myself so insuffici-
 ent for it! This again makes me dread to live.

Ah! my strength is not equal to such service! I
 often sink under it. My friend with you knows
 something of the terrors I have undergone on
 this account; and, in my dejection this morn-
 ing, I was afraid that these terrors, like armed
 men, were returning upon me; and then I do
 not wonder that I dread living, if it should be
 thus with me. Then pity me indeed, O my
 friend, and pray hard for me!

But do not you be apprehensive of any thing
 of this sort for yourself. It does not arise from
 any thing that is common to me and you. I will
 tell my friend, as well as I can, what it is. The
 case, I think, is properly called *distemper*, either
 of body or soul, which you will, (I should in-
 deed have first spoken of emptiness and barren-
 ness in myself, which is a real cause, and a great
 one.) What I particularly intend by this *distem-
 per*, which prevails much at times, are certain
 (what shall I call them?) qualms, damps, dis-
 trusts,

trusts, dislikes, which seize me suddenly, and spoil all that I am about. Perhaps you do not conceive the thing, and I pray you never may! I fancy this *dyspepsia* is in a great measure peculiar to myself, or else, if others know it by experience, they keep it to themselves, thinking it a great weakness; but from such a friend as you, I will not hide the greatest of my weaknesses, that you may pity and pray for me.

How free at times is my spirit for public service, if I could just then step into the pulpit? But these intervening damps or qualms destroy my relish, depress my spirits, and seal up the subject I am upon, though I thought I had large matter before me.

You know not what all this means, but I know it to be a sore evil, and what would make me drive heavily on; but this, I think, (from the knowledge of myself, and my conjectures of the case), that, if I could once get over the newness of the work, and be accustomed to it, this temper would leave me.

However, my friend, upon the whole, do not pray for my life; let me leave all these troubles, and die in peace. I could add more fears that I have about life; but these two are the principal, *the deceitfulness of my own heart, and the greatness of the work I must return to.*

Here I was forced to stop, being called away. I have since had more comfortable thoughts. I thought of that word, and said, *When my heart is overwhelmed within me, I will look to the rock that is higher than I.* I reasoned with myself, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.* Again, those words encouraged me; *As thy day*

is, so shall thy strength be: and be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. I threw myself down before the Lord in prayer and supplication, and made my particular requests known unto him, casting all my cares and burdens upon him, and telling him in the boldness of prayer, "Thou shalt go with me; thy presence shall be with me, or I cannot live; thou shalt keep my heart by thine almighty power, and thou shalt strengthen me in all my work; and then, if this be thy will concerning me, I am content once more to live." But still, when I look back again, I am desirous rather to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

Pray hard for me; you see I need it; call upon my friend with you to pray —

To —

WHAT shall I say to my friend now, most to the purpose, and of most service? God direct me! O that I could impart some spiritual gift, and do your soul some good! What is the present temper of your soul? How can I know it? How shall I speak a seasonable word?

My heart is often inditing some good matter for you, and then I wish for an opportunity to impart it; only to say that, and not a word more. But it cannot be. Then I pray, and turn myself to your better friend, and ever present companion, the blessed Spirit, and beg him to take what I think a proper matter for you, and shew it to your soul, if it is really of use, or that he would take something

thing more useful, (as he knows the most suitable teachings), and shew it unto you. And then I comfort myself, and content myself with the ignorance of you, *that he will teach you all things, and lead you into all truth.*

But why is all I hear from you complaining? It makes me very uneasy continually to hear it. How is it? Is it a custom you have taken up? Is it a temper you have chosen? Perhaps you think there are modesty and humility in such complaint, and so it is recommended to you.

No; it is an uncomfortable temper; it is provoking to God; it is discouraging to all spiritual religion; and it reflects dishonour on your great profession. As to its being uncomfortable, that you feel; only compare it with what the scripture says, *that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness*, and with what you read of *peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and of joy unspeakable and full of glory*; or only compare it with what your own soul has known of a different manner of life formerly; which is most desirable? Are you not tempted to exchange?

As to the provocation it gives to God, has he not given you many testimonies of his love? I have heard you relate them. And why all these peculiar favours and distinguishing goodness, but to witness his love? And shall all be in vain? You will hardly believe the many testimonies he has given: And does it please him, think you, to make him a liar? More he is willing to give, but this is your temper, *I will not believe.*

And how can you do any thing in religion fervently with such a temper? It strikes a damp to the very life and spirit of all religion. *We love*

Gad

God because he first loved us. Nothing is such a motive to our love, as a sight of his love; nor can we possibly love with such an earnest exertion of the soul in that uniting affection, when we doubt of his love to us. What a damp to faith? to praise? to prayer? How heavily does all move on, under a thought that all is in vain?

And does it not besides reflect dishonour on your great profession? Your soul knows the thing in experience! Often have you said, "My beloved is mine, and I am his; me he loved, and he gave himself for me." Then your heart burnt within you, it winged your affections, and you felt that you loved: you could then praise, you could then pray, and do all with delight.

There is nothing I can say, of which I think you ignorant; but you will not improve your knowledge to your comfort. I know you too well to suspect you will think me too forward, and, did you know the spirit towards you with which I write, I could not possibly offend.

I say then, of all things do not cherish such a spirit of complaining, nor think it modest and humble, and that all the evil in it is, that it is uncomfortable, and that is to yourself, as perhaps some do, indulging themselves in such a temper; but think more of the sin that is in it, and the ill influence it has upon the whole of religion, and for the future dare not complain.

But perhaps this does not reach the case. "The thing my friend says is right, but her case is mistaken." Yes, it is mistaken by one of us, but I hope you mistake it. I take it I speak to a child of light, and such an one ought not to walk in darkness. But it may be you doubt of

that, for I would hear all you have to say patiently, and with concern. "Notwithstanding all this," says my friend, "it is possible and easy to presume, and it is not the duty of all to believe that God loves them. God knows, it would be the most joyful discovery heaven or earth could make to me, that he did love me."

Is this your voice, my friend? Would you believe the love of God, but dare not? Do you want the marks and evidencing characters? Do your sins forbid, your heart forbid such a comfortable persuasion, that God loves you? This may be the case, and if it be, my heart pities you. I can conceive of your concern, for my heart is not a stranger to the case; too often it is my own. It was so the last time I wrote to ——— and it is so, as often as I thoroughly consider myself, and go upon the work of examining my heart, unless another stand by me and strengthen me, and some relieving prospect be set before me. "Oh! my heart! it is a world of iniquity: this is my complaint: of old it was so; of late it is more so than formerly; and it will be so, I fear, as long as I live, till I am delivered from the bondage of this death; Oh! when shall it once be!" But this is not to my design. I could myself conform to your temper, instead of reproving it. I could mourn with you in mourning, and go on, and outdo you in all your complaints; and I hope, so well do I think of you, that I have more reason to do so than you.

Well then, since our cases so much agree; and, whether we will or no, we are often forced to complain, forced to be in fears and doubts, I will tell you what is the course I take at such times,
and

and how I get relief whenever I have it. I see my sins before me ; they rise high ; while I stand and look, they swell and rise like mountains. The clouds gather thick and black, and all the prospect is darkened. I think of the aggravating circumstances, clear knowledge, holy profession, love and grace abused, and have not a word to say. Oh ! my sins, they reach to the heavens, they go over my head, and are an heavy burden, too heavy for me to bear ! I am ready to sink under the weight of their guilt. Oh ! my backslidings, my perpetual backslidings ! The sins I was guilty of before I had any knowledge of God's ways, hardly come into the account. They are sins committed since that wound me. The Spirit grieved, and quenched, and resisted. Christ crucified afresh, again and again. " Yes," say I, " I feel the Spirit begins to cease his workings, and he who has knocked, is withdrawing. What knowledge have I sinned against ? What a profession have I turned my back upon ? And what abundant grace have I abused ?" Loads, loads of guilt, how do they sink me down ? All is dark about me, and methinks I dread the oath of God more terrible than thunder, and yet I expect it coming ; *I swear in my wrath they shall not enter into my rest.* To whom did he swear ? To them who tempted him, proved him, and saw his works ; to them with whom he was provoked and grieved in the wilderness. How well does this agree with me ? Then I look upon myself as one farthest from the kingdom of heaven, I who was once amongst the first in the way to it, but now, alas ! the last. I think of meek humble saints, obscure and quiet in their way, entering

into the kingdom; and I, a vain pretender, a forward talker, but unacquainted with the spirit of the kingdom, with my tongue well turned to Tay, Lord, Lord, but with no heart to love and serve him, shall be thrust out. *Thrust* out, what does that express? My friend, can you conceive of it? Methinks it fills my soul with the most cutting anguish, to see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and many more, from the east and the west, from the north and the south, of less note and account in the world, of less note in their profession than I, sitting down in the kingdom of God, and I myself thrust out: the Lord himself, of whom I have seemed so knowing, and so often talked, professing not to know me, not so much as who I am: the Lord himself, who once knocked, and stood, and waited at my door with all his grace, shutting me out —

These are my apprehensions sometimes which bring me very low, so that my heart is almost overwhelmed within me. And something like this my friend has known. Well, but my relief. Yes, at some times through grace, though brought so low, I have been relieved. My sin is before me, I acknowledge it all, nor offer a thought to alleviate the guilt. But is there not, I ask, a possibility of pardon? Yes, grace is infinite. But is it possible after all that God should love me? Then I think of the everlasting covenant, the covenant of grace, the unchangeable covenant. I think of the everlasting love of the Father, and the sovereignty of all his proceedings; he loves, because he loves, and *is gracious to whom he will be gracious; his ways are not as ours, nor his thoughts as ours.* The manner of men,
and

and the manner of God, are infinitely different. I think of the Redeemer's love and grace, the wondrous proofs of them in our redemption, *the love of Christ which passes knowledge*; and that ancient doctrine too I meditate upon, which has been at the bottom of all my hope; whenever I have any, *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.* — *Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.* — "Yes," says my doubting soul then, "here is atonement and efficacy enough. Plenteous is this redemption, were it but mine." Then I remember the gracious invitations to the waters of life. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. If any man thirst, let him come and drink. The Spirit says, Come; Jesus says, Come; and the Father will in no wise cast him out who comes. Let him who is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.* Such words of grace as these, when the power of the Spirit comes along with them and applies them, have been relieving, and the very entrance of them has given me life; for from hence, from the good words of God on which he has caused me to hope, I derive all my comfort, and look for it no where else. For how can any thing but revelation discover that such sins as mine shall or can be forgiven? By any rational deduction, I am sure I can never reach it. This I must say, I bless God for the notions I have of free grace, and the gospel, (and my friend I believe has the same), otherwise I must inevitably be all my lifetime in bondage. No other set of principles could ever free me from the fears of death. It is to free grace that I direct my views; the well-ordered

ordered covenant; and the blood of Jesus that cleanses from all sin.

Thus I think that no sins should discourage me from coming to Christ at first. "But the sins
 "after the knowledge of his grace, the dread
 "of having turned his grace into wantonness,
 "these discourage me." Then such a word of grace as this sometimes relieves me; *Fear not, ye have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart, for the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make them his people, 1 Sam. xii. 20. And again, Behold, thou hast spoken, and done evil things as thou couldst, Jer. iii. 5. 22.* And yet it is said, *Return.* Sometimes I stay long without any impressions from these passages. At other times the grace and love affect me, and the tender and endearing voice melts me, and sends me to prayer. I take with me words, and endeavour to return. The fourteenth of Hosea has been of use at such times, and other places of scripture, with which I doubt not but you are conversant.

In short, after such times of humiliation, dejection, and discouragement, so has the Spirit opened my eyes to understand some scriptures, something of Christ he has so taken and shewn to me, and so satisfactory, and suitable have been the views of the covenant, that I could not but begin to say, "Who know but Jesus after all
 "may love me? Methinks he overcomes me,
 "and smiles upon me. Lord, I believe, help
 "thou my unbelief." But scarce without trembling can I speak the word, and, fearful of presuming,

fuming, I hardly know how to say, " Lord, I believe."

This is the course I take, and such considerations as these are what keep up my spirits, and permit me to live in hope. Sometimes I conceive myself separated from the blessed Jesus, and as taking upon me the character of his enemy, (only to try my temper towards him), then I feel violent indignation arising at the thought. Methinks I would instantly destroy my very being, were it in my power, if it were so. From such workings as these, I discern some workings of love to the blessed person; and, if secured of this, as this I know is only a consequent, I know from thence the antecedent; *he first loved me*, and hence it is that *I love him*; which is all that I want to know.

Now this is the use of what I have been saying; that if these, or any other considerations, are sufficient to relieve me under all my discouraging prospects, the same more easily may give relief to my friend.

But you shall not say, " what is said does not belong to you, because I think too well of your case." I will suppose the worst of my complaining friend. — *You are vile, your heart is wicked, desperately wicked.* Be it so; I will suppose you as vile as myself, and more sinful and vile I cannot possibly suppose you; to the Searcher of all hearts I appeal, who only knows our hearts; to the slighted Jesus I appeal; to the striving, but resisted, quenched, grieved Spirit I appeal, whose course more sinful? whose spirit more vain? whose heart more hard? yours or mine? Well, what shall we do? Shall we
sink

sink under our conflicts, and despair? We both once run well, but we were hindered, and since we have been backsliding with a perpetual backsliding. Does this course please us? Our God says, *Return, and I will heal your backslidings.* And shall we not return? Shall we say, "There is no hope; we have followed strangers and after them we will go?" God forbid that this should be our resolution. My friend, it shall not; nor will we thus weaken our hands, by giving up our hope.

Let us now take with us words; God's words of grace and precious promises let us plead, and together return. *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* And how does the Lord receive us? Does he return in mercy to us? or in his wrath reject us? We are both now standing before the Lord in all our vileness, yet desiring to return. The language of our God towards us, methinks, must be such as this: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? (once he said, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone," *Hof. iv. 17.* but since "he has heard him bemoaning himself," as I hope he hath heard us, see his heart); "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. (Oh! how encouraging is his grace!) I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim? for I am God, and not man," *Hof. xi. 8. 9.* This must be our argument.

Thus he expostulates with himself about us.

— See

— See the divine compassion, and the tenderness of his heart in receiving us! “How shall I give thee up?” And yet what shall he do with us? Again he says, “How shall I put thee amongst the children?” Jer. iii. 19. We are not worthy indeed, *having done evil as we could*, as they did, verse 5. But what is the event of all these reasonings, giving us up, or putting us among the children? We are before the Lord, what will he do with us? Why, as it follows there; *Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me.* An happy conclusion indeed! Well then, my friend, let us, from this example and procedure, take encouragement; and, having seriously thought on our ways, and returned, let us take the words he has put into our mouths, and from this time cry unto him, *Thou art my Father.* This let us do as backsliding, but returning children, to confirm our relation, to clear up our interest, to the strengthening our hands, and comforting our hearts for the future.

But if I, or my friend, put another supposition, that we never truly entered into the relation, and are not of the number of God’s children, that we have something in our wanderings, and something in our hearts that shew it, and that the spots we have are not the spots of God’s children; *what then shall be done?* This indeed is a sorrowful supposition. But can you give up your hold so easily, and come to this conclusion? No, it goes to your heart.

What then? And did we never love him at all? that excellent person, *the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely*, as we were used

to conceive of him, to whom we have given up ourselves so often, of whose love and society we have been so ambitious, whom we have wished to please, and as to whom we have sincerely grieved that we have so often offended him. Did we never love him at all? Shall I own after all that I did not? Or will you, my friend, own it? No, you shall not, you cannot.—Nor will I, I think, altogether neither. — *Or what then?* Did he never love us in the least after all? Have we not had tokens of it? Let us call to remembrance former experiences. Did he not once tell us, that he loved us, and shed abroad his love in our hearts? And did not the Spirit witness to the testimony, and warm our very souls with the discovery? Was all this delusion then? Who was it told us that he loved us, and so beguiled us into loving him again for it? Was it an enemy who has done this? No sure; our enemy better understands his own interest, than thus to work against himself. Would an enemy to him, and an enemy to us, tell us that he loved us, and so recommend him to us, and work upon us to love him? The fruits, the peaceable and good fruits, arising from the discovery, faith, zeal, and praise, love, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, all seem to witness for him, who is the author of peace, and the God of all grace.

Can we then cast away, not to say our confidence, and full assurance of hope, but our humble hopes through grace, of our interest in Jesus, and in the love of God? My friend shall not, and I would not be forced to it.

But still, rather than you should go on thus complaining, doubting, and questioning all, I will

will for once suppose you are really a stranger to the blessed relation. And yet, however this important affair stands, this manner is not right. My friend is not contented, I hope, to go on in a state of fears and uncertainty. If you are not happily related to Jesus, and interested in his salvation, what then is your work? If this be your case and complaint to-day, let it not be so to-morrow. The strain of my friend's discourse, seems to be this; "I am afraid the great work was not thoroughly done, and, if so, I am miserable for ever; I have nothing to do with hope or comfort." Pray, why so? Is there not yet room? Is the door shut? No; the gracious sound still proclaims in our ears, *Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely. Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters. And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.* It is not necessary to come to a strict conclusion about what was done before. If there was nothing done, or if we doubt of the efficacy, let us repeat the blessed work, as if not done before. Whenever we doubt, then we will set about the work again; as strangers we will come, (and perhaps this thought of coming to Jesus, as strangers and unknown, may move on our affections, and we from hence may find ourselves more fervent), we will believe in his name, we will venture on his merits, his blood, and his covenant, and yield ourselves to him, as his servants to obey him; and from this time, if not before, we will say to him, *My Lord, and my God.*

So that, supposing you are now uncertain about the great relation; nay, put the case you were now an alien, a stranger, and a foreigner,

(but God knows I dare not think so) ; yet when I hear from you again, I may reasonably expect to hear you are of the children, and heirs ; for what should hinder ?

Shall the utmost importunity of a dear friend prevail with you, at the time when you receive this, to go to Jesus and beg him to be your Saviour, to confess your sins over his blood, to believe in the great atonement, and chuse him for your God ? You are not averse to the work, I know : No, you have often done it, and now, when much importunity of a friend, jealous for your soul, is not wanting, I may conclude it will be done seriously, (let not time, place, ceremony, order make a delay ; these are not necessary to be minded, but break through all, and instantly do it) ; and then either the work will be done, or I shall hear the reason why it failed. And what can that be ? Why, that Jesus refused you coming, and cast you out, contrary to his exprefs declaration ; or that your sins were of so deep a dye, that his blood could not cleanse you from them, or that he had not grace to measure with such lengths of sin. Shall I hear this ? No, this can never be. Then I shall hear you were accepted. That you were so, and that you believed you were so, would be a pleasant hearing to your friend, who has so often been uneasy at your complaints.

I am quite spent, and tired with writing, and have not spirits to add all I would. But think of this that I have said. Attempt the blessed work anew in the strength of the Lord, who is the author of faith, and let me be pleased, let me be honoured with doing your soul good.

To

To preserve this peace and comfort when obtained, live more by faith on the Son of God, and study well the covenant of grace, the immutable things on which salvation stands; not varying frames and tempers of ours; and from these immutable things may you have strong consolation!

Remember that God delights sometimes to *show patterns of all long-suffering*, and that there his grace triumphs in its full glory. Instances of this sort, my friend, according to our distinct conceptions of things, shall you and I be. Well, be it so. Then shall our Redeemer be more admired in us than others, more glorified in us than in others of his saints. Grace, grace is the sound through all the host. I long to join in the shouting. When we are brought through the doubtings and fears, the temptations, the corruptions, the snares, the devices, the subtle wiles, and the fiery darts that opposed our passage, and have reached the heavenly world, what wonder will surprise us? what zeal will transport us? In stronger sounds, and louder notes, our voices will be heard above the multitude, crying, Grace, grace to our Redeemer; *To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests to God and the Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.*

I thought of saying many things to you upon other different heads, according to my usual allowed freedom with my friend, which I am sure would not offend. But now I cannot. Let me but hear your complaints and fears are gone, let me but hear they are exchanged for joy and peace in

in believing, and such tidings will give me an happy day.

In order to bring you to this comfortable persuasion, we have been talking of the doctrines and principles of grace, and the covenant. — But there is something for duty and practice too, you know, required of us in our returning, such as *a walking in newness of life, &c.*

There are particular duties to be practised, suitable to our profession, and the general temper and course of religion. I have been of late much considering that passage, *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* Oh! that it were impressed on my heart, and even wrought into my spirit and course! At times, I bless God, I have been under very strong impressions of it. With what pleasure have I gone into the resolution to have done with this earth, and all things earthly, to be violent for the kingdom, and not concerned about any thing else? not a wish, not a thought more about ought beside, not a project more of my working fancy, that has this world for the place of its scene, but heaven, and the kingdom, should be regarded by me as my all. This, at some happy minutes, has been the frame and temper of my mind. But, Oh, that such an heart were always in me! Oh! that I could be always in the temper I am sometimes in! But, alas, my inconstancy! The impression all vanishes, and leaves me really as if it had never been. Pray for me, I beseech you, and strive earnestly in your prayers for me. I have found, that when I have been cold and unconcerned about myself, yet I could pray for my friend; and this brought me into a
right

right temper, and then I could pray for myself. As to newness of life, and the general course of religion, with the duties you should particularly practise, I remember I once wrote to you in short upon that head. I recommended some things then to you very freely. As far as I remember, they were as suitable as any thing I can now say.

I pressed you then to serious *prayer*; and let me now exhort you to be serious in it, if not long. Let nothing discourage you, but come to the work, though you are unprepared, and have hardly any thing to say. Tell the Lord so, and let this be the subject of your complaint; and perhaps this may affect you till you become prepared. Beg the Spirit of grace and supplication. Of what singular use is he! Of what absolute necessity is this Spirit in our present condition in this world! I beseech you do not be discouraged from prayer. *Pray without ceasing*. Remember to what end our Lord speaks his parable, *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, Luke xviii. 1. *Be not weary, nor faint in your mind*, though you see not immediately the success of your prayers. There is waiting work required of you, *Is. viii. 17*.

Perhaps taking in another part of time *extraordinary* for this work may be of use. What think you of a few minutes spent this way in the middle of the day, besides night and morning? I have observed, whether from the newness of the thing, or whether God has particularly owned it, that I have been lively at such times, when dull at others. Be short, I say, and attentive to the work, rather than longer, and the heart wandering, so that guilt should be contracted by

by it. My own experience furnishes me with reason for what I say; but you, I would hope, have not such occasion for it. Be constant however in serious stated prayer.

And then there are what we call *ejaculations*; short transient liftings up of the heart to God in any place, time, or company. These too are of singular use to keep up the heart with God, and to preserve a serious spirit between stated duties, which otherwise might be lost. These may easily be frequent, and are generally more warm and fervent than longer duties. My friend knows they are not burthensome, but repeated with pleasure — This I would say of *prayer*. If what I have said is only an occasion of turning your own thoughts to the subject, it is enough; you will pursue it further to advantage.

Then *spiritual meditation* is of excellent use in the Christian life. My dear friend, for the usefulness of the work, for the pleasure of the employment, I beseech you exercise yourself this way; many are its parts. — *Self-examination*; how necessary is it towards keeping the heart, converse with God, and fellowship and communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ? What if one quarter of an hour every day, morning or evening, or when you please, were spent this way! Once I did so, and then it went well with me. *Reading of the word* is also of great use, and a careful attendance to the exceeding great and precious promises, *that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* Oh! how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day! Ps. cxix. 97. Finally, let your conversation be as becomes the gospel

spel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in the gospel, Phil. i. 27. And the God of peace be with you! Farewell!

To Mr —

I Have been examining my own heart; but it will never bear examination with comfort, *My heart*, I say: Oh! how I abhor myself! that deceitful, that desperately wicked thing! that mystery of iniquity! Ever am I learning more and more of its mysterious wickedness, but I can never come to the bottom of it.

Oh! my friend, did you know but the half of my vileness, it would stagger all your love, your esteem, your friendship for me; and your soul that is knit might be severed again. But it is well for me, that none knows me, but he who hath infinite compassion, infinite love, and unchangeable grace. And oh! that I was at this time well assured that he who has all this can yet possibly love! I remember his holiness, and must not that thought forbid? holiness as perfect and as infinite as his grace. Then I remember myself, my vileness, and must not that quite forbid? This is not idle reasoning, only to try the faculty, and play with propositions. Can a soul be calm and unmoved, when it is doubting and reasoning about, nay, drawing conclusions against the love of him, who is the invisible, the eternal God? What shall I say to these things? Shall I rest satisfied with the doubt, and be contented with the conclusion? God forbid. But shall I presume? Can the holy, holy, holy Father love? Can the wait-

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ing,

ing, slighted, abused Redeemer love? Can the tender, loving, grieved, quenched Spirit, always be grieved and quenched, and always love? When I think of the Holy Spirit, as a constant companion, conscious to all my heart, and dwelling in it, (and so the same of the immediate presence of each other of the THREE), the thought sometimes shocks me, like a thought of blasphemy, so to conceive of the Holy Ones dwelling there, and delighting to dwell there.

See a parallel! Lot in Sodom, and the Holy Ghost in me. Lot's righteous soul was vexed from day to day with their unlawful deeds; so is the Holy Spirit daily grieved and quenched in me. And what was the event? Lot was sent forth at last from Sodom, and left it to be destroyed by fire from heaven. And so God's *Spirit shall not always strive with men*, but he will give up hardened sinners to destruction. But, oh! let me think of the sequel alone! After all to be a cast-away! Oh! the thought! The rock within me melts at the terror of it. What, never to see the lovely face, in which I have been wont to conceive such charms? of which I have spoken so often, and so much but lately? the lovely appearance of Jesus *your* Redeemer, and what not *mine*? I must here lift up my voice and weep. ——— And not *mine*; can I bear it? Not see him, or see him terrible and mine enemy? All who heard me speak of him, to stand up in that day and witness against me, that out of my own mouth I am condemned ——— But can I give up my hold quite? Am I his enemy? No sure. My soul rises with indignation at the thought, ——— *Thine* enemy, blessed Saviour! Lord, thou

thou knowest all things, thou knowest I am not. —No, he is my Beloved sure; my best Beloved still. My Beloved indeed has withdrawn himself and is gone; but still I love him.

Do you, my friend, who have his presence and his heart, tell him that I love him. *Tell him,* (for so does my heart go out after him at this time that I am writing), *that I am sick of love.* Tell him all your friendly soul can tell him familiarly in prayer, of your poor brother and companion in this world of tribulation, absence, and sin, till you move him to return, if possible, so as never to withdraw again. But oh! this is too good to be expected! I know I shall slight him, and provoke him to withdraw; and must I do the thing I now mourn for, suffer for, and which my soul hates? The Lord help me; *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

But did I not tell you how it would be with me if I returned to health? Had I not reason to dread my heart? It is so as I feared. I find I am sensibly gone backward since I recovered from sickness. Oh! that God would once establish, strengthen, and settle me in his grace! How often have I prayed this prayer? But when will it be? My dear friend, pray for me, and pray more earnestly; my case requires it, and you have pity and love to incline you. Remember that this was writ with many tears; and let the case affect you, and my desire prevail with you the more.

I am quite spent, not being well recovered of my last illness. I expected to have seen you last Thursday at ———; but pray for me one half hour the more on that account, and I will excuse the omission.

Farewell, dear David *; be thou a man after God's own heart, a perfect Christian; and if I may not because of my instability so excel, as my soul would desire, yet let there be some good thing in me toward the Lord; and then the time shall come, when the weak one *shall be as David, and thou my David as an angel of the Lord.* Yet then you may remember,

Your weak but faithful, &c.

To Mr. —

Dear —

Nov. 23. 1719.

PRESUMING that my friend has, or would have written to me by this time, had he opportunity, though with difficulty I set me down to say something to him again. What shall I tell thee that will please? Things have gone mighty well with me of late since I saw thee; better than ever I expected again. The last week, and part of the week before, have been old times brought over again. I was at first discouraged, on account of my unfaithfulness in watching and walking with God, and my heart's departing from him in the vanity and hurry of my London journey. But he, *who keeps covenant*, and hath infinite mercy, returned; he communes with me often, and my soul holds communion with him. We are, I think, as conversant as ever. — Oh! the grace! — Many hours of solitude I have had, but oh! how pleasant! At times, through grace, in prayer I meet with

* Mr —, and this friend to whom he writes, used to converse by letters with one another, under the names of *David* and *Jonathan*.

him,

him, and in meditation I hold him fast, and cannot let him go : Nor does he endeavour to go, but rather continues the last, as with Abraham, Gen. xviii. 33. till he left off speaking.

This my friend will perhaps be a little surprised at, because he did not, when he saw me last, observe the extraordinary temper. No ; then I felt it not myself. My spirit was not then recovered from my journey. I remember that passing saying of yours, amongst other discourse, " Me- " thinks you seem now reconciled to life." I thought of it more after, and improved it. But now could you see my heart, you would think otherwise.

In short, for some reason of this sort, next to the mysterious workings of grace, know, that, for so long a time as I say, I have observed my distemper working strongly upon me, and have had the sentence of death in me more evidently than ever. Others, as well as myself, apprehend the symptoms of my distemper to be upon me now more dangerous than before. But, blessed be God, since his return, (how seasonably does he time his grace, and the manifestations of his love ?), I have felt the symptoms with pleasure ; I have received joyfully the sentence, and do carry it about me as a spring of comfort and refreshment. It is the greatest I have ; nor would I be robbed of it for the world. For in my present circumstances and temper of disrelish to this world, and my desires and hopes of a better, this sentence of death is the very comfort of my life. Oh ! the blessed influence of afflictions, when our heavenly Father sends them and co-operates with them ! How weaning from the world ?

world? How restoring to the soul? Methinks they clear up my sight, and give me a different, but a truer view of all things. And then I think of nothing above what I ought to think. So that, in short, at times, thou mayst find me the most tasteless unconcerned creature to all things earthly in the world. Nothing pleases hardly, but as it has respect to the future life. Upon this score it is that I most value my friendship, and my David, because there I hope to spend with him a pleasant and lasting day. For the future, let my joys be all from heaven! They are sufficient here; for I can say, (though I am perfectly tasteless, and out of relish with all things here, and count them but dung and dross, and thus am emptied), that I am not barren of what I count gain, and take pleasure in. I am filled. *The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*, affords rich entertainment, pleasure, expectation, and mighty gain. I am thinking often on that word, "Thou shalt have thy delight in the Almighty." And another saying, "Acquaint now thyself with him." This *now* is the mark of my ambition, to be entirely disengaged from the world; and in my many hours of solitude, since I am to have no companion of you, to acquaint myself intimately and familiarly with him, and so to have all my delight in the Almighty. Is this contracting the compass of pleasure? Will the object prove barren of delight? No, not till I can exhaust infinity. Help me with thy prayers, the prayers of David, in these wishes and projects of mine; for here I am right I am sure. —

Believe me, with the utmost faithfulness and affection,

Thine, &c.

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A P P E N D I X.

AFTER a life thus devoted to God, the reader may be desirous to know in what manner our author concluded his days; and I am glad that oblivion has not covered this important period; so that I am able not only to gratify the curiosity, but I hope to animate the pious disposition of my readers, by the following account, composed of materials, taken by me from the relation of one of our author's sisters, who was in the house with her brother during the time of his illness, and whose unblemished character may be justly esteemed the bond of her veracity.

I would have it observed, that the last composition of our author's in these memoirs, is a meditation, dated January 1. 1719-20. p. 145.; and that this soliloquy breathes a most noble spirit of humility, and sacred pleasure. From about this time to his death, which happened in the June following, our author was extremely weak, and evidently in the irrecoverable depths of a consumption. He was so enfeebled, that, to prevent the trouble of going up and down stairs, his room was upon the ground-floor; he

was

was obliged to be carried to and from his bed; and nature was so miserably worn down, that the softest linen was provided, to prevent the skin from chafing off his bones. But still his soul did not appear to have any concern in the hastening ruins of his body, except that of a prisoner, who sees the walls of his cell tottering about him, and the hour of liberty at hand. Our author's discourse was serious and spiritual: in particular he addressed himself in profitable exhortations to his relatives, one of which, concerning the vanity of this world, and the glories of a better state, was immediately directed to the sister, from whom I have this account; and who told me, that the remembrance would never wear off her mind. Amidst all these threatening symptoms of *death*, these triumphant banners, *as* he is often styled, *of the king of terrors*, our author was serene and comfortable, and was sometimes, what is generally called, *innocently* chearful. While his mother has been relating how deplorably bad he was, he would break out in tuning an anthem, hymn, or the like, upon which she would afterwards observe, that his chearfulness would be apt to make people believe that she had given a false account of him; to which he would reply, "that his soul rejoiced, "and therefore he sung," or to that effect. The day before he died, two of his particular friends (to whom his letters were writ) came to visit him. He was quite calm and composed, tuned, as far as he was able, an anthem, or part of one, and was, as his temper was naturally pleasant, *innocently* chearful. At two o'clock the next morning, death appeared just ready to strike

strike the long expected blow; the struggles and agonies of nature were severe and long, notwithstanding he had been so much weakened before; but about four o'clock, having turned his eyes to one of his friends, he whispered in a feeble interrupted voice, but yet distinct enough to be heard, *Peace—Praise—I have peace*, and so expired: the last dying pains, and these triumphs of joy mingling, as it were, together, the *first* of which are for ever over, but the joy shall never end.

Thus died this excellent young man on June 10. 1720, having finished his *two and twentieth* year the 24th of March preceding.

My preface has been so very long, that I must restrain myself from enlargements here, but I beg leave to add a few hints.

In the first place, the doctrines which were the food of his soul in health, were his cordials in his sickness, and the sources of his joy, as we have reason to think, in the article of dissolution. His faith was not an hypocritical pretence, but was inwrought into his soul, nor could it be severed from him by the long denounced sentence, nor the violent arrest of death. It was a faith that cheered his soul amidst the vicissitudes of life, and could even smile under the power of the last enemy.

Again, how much more preferable is such a life and death, to the vain pleasures our age so eagerly pursues, and the melancholy exits which must be expected at the end of them? *How sweet*, as St Augustine observes, *is it to go without a share of these destructive sweets*, that waste our inestimable hours, dethrone the powers of reason,

son, alienate the heart from the dictates of celestial wisdom, lull the conscience into a momentary repose, to awake with more inveterate rage, increase and sharpen the stings of death, and make the prospect into eternity inexpressibly dark and terrible!

Further, if any good inclinations are excited by the perusal of these memoirs, let them be encouraged and promoted. Let every good *inclination* be strengthened into *purpose*, every *purpose* into *resolution*, and every *resolution* be immediately completed in *action*. Do not trifle nor delay; *trifling* and *delay* are the thieves of time, and murderers of souls. What is fit to be done *to-morrow* as to the *one thing needful*, is more fit to be done *to-day*: remember that God's Spirit *will not always strive with man*, and that therefore it is dangerous to quench, or resist his motions. Apply to God by prayer for his grace and strength, and continue asking and seeking in the name of Christ, till you receive the blessing from the God of salvation, the blessing of the atoning blood of Jesus, a pacified conscience, and a new heart to invigorate and enable you to an holy and heavenly life.

Again, let me advise you not to be ridiculed out of these principles or these practices by open sinners, or empty professors. Examine the matter seriously and impartially with yourselves, whether such a life and death as have been represented are fit for your imitation. This surely will not be a business unworthy your consideration, because the affair is awfully momentous, and regards the welfare of your souls. And if upon the issue you find that here is an example

ple worthy to be followed, let not a joke, or a
sneer, or a cavil, or an easily-pronounced charge
of hypocrisy, or enthusiasm, make you drop or
abate your opinion of these memoirs; and ex-
tinguish your kindling purposes to regulate your-
self by them. Where is the reason or the mag-
nanimity of that mind that will let its conviction
be either sacrificed or shaken by a jest! Think,
judge, and act for yourselves; this is the prero-
gative of a free-born Protestant, and it is the
glory of a man. Stem then the tide of wit and
numbers, if you have reason and religion, and
the good of your souls embarked with you, ra-
ther than be borne down by a popular current,
when you must part with such sacred and plea-
sant companions.

I will only add, that the author of these me-
moirs, with all his piety and devotion, was inno-
cently free, and agreeable in conversation. His
temper, as I am well assured, was very chearful,
and pleasant. He had no gloomy austerity, de-
jected countenance, or unfriendly reserve; but
his religion was indeed the *light* as well as the
life of his soul, and diffused abroad its amiable
and self-recommending lustres among his ac-
quaintance and friends. His piety was not the
offspring of melancholy, nor did it appear to
lead him to it, but it was truly worthy of that
world of *light* from which it came, and whither
it so safely and joyfully conducted him. How
vain the pretence to joy is without religion, and
how much *true* joy is promoted by it, is well
described by the justly celebrated Dr Young in
his *Night-Thoughts*, and confirmed by this ex-
ample.

Can

Can joy, unbottom'd in reflection, stand?
 Can joy, like thine, secure itself an hour?
 Can joy, like thine, meet accident unshock'd?
 Or talk with threat'ning death, and not turn pale?
 In such a world, in such a nature, *these*
 Are needful fundamentals of delight;
 'These fundamentals give delight *indeed*;
 Delight, pure, delicate, and durable;
 Delight, unshaken, masculine, divine;
 A constant, and a sound, but *serious* joy.

N^o VIII.

F I N I S.

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